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I.—ON THE DATE AND COMPOSITION OF *THE
OLD LAW*.¹

It is the purpose of this paper to study the unassisted work of Middleton, of Rowley, and of Massinger for the individual characteristics of these men. From the characteristics thus arrived at, the part each man probably took in the com-

¹The texts used in this paper are as follows:

Middleton's Plays; edited by A. H. Bullen, Boston, 1885.

Massinger's Plays; edited by Arthur Symonds, Mermaid Series, 1893.

Rowley's Plays; *All's Lost by Lust*, London, 1633. (The quarto.)

A Match at Midnight, in vol. ii of *Ancient British Drama*,
3 vols. London, 1810.

A Woman Never Vexed, in vol. xii of Hazlitt's Dodsley,
4th edition, London, 1875.

In making quotations for the purpose of illustration, I have been confronted by a dilemma. If I made them long enough to be perfectly clear to a person not very familiar with the plays, the paper would be too long. But if I cut them shorter, there was danger of failure to be convincing. In trying to take a middle course I fear I have oftenest erred on the side of brevity; I hope, therefore, that those interested in *The Old Law* will carefully reread the play before attempting section v of this paper.

I desire here to acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor George P. Baker of Harvard University for his courteous and valuable assistance during the preparation of this paper; also to my colleague, Professor Frank E. Farley, for helpful criticism.

position of *The Old Law* will be determined. This assignment of parts will be used as the basis for determining the probable method of composition, and the approximate date of the play.

I.

It will be necessary to consider Middleton's characteristics only as they appear in the seven plays by him published in 1602, 1607, and 1608, since his part in *The Old Law* is pretty generally thought to be very early. Bullen¹ assigns the date of this play to 1599 apparently on no further evidence than the speech of the Clerk in act III, scene 1, line 34; speaking of Agatha, the Clerk says, "Born in an. 1540, and now 'tis '99." Bullen adds, however, that this is "a point on which we cannot speak with certainty." Fleay,² Dyce,³ C. H. Herford,⁴ and A. W. Ward,⁵ all agree on this date and evidence, but Ward adds that the play "in subject as well as in occasional details savours of the student." Further evidence for the early writing of Middleton's part in this play may be found by comparing it in plot and general treatment with six other plays of the same type, usually considered to be by Middleton alone. *Blurt, Master-Constable*, and *The Phoenix*, which are known to be early, *The Mayor of Queensborough*, *Women Beware Women*, *More Dissemblers besides Women*, and *The Witch*, which it is generally agreed are later, are all of the same general type of plot. They have a tragic main plot and a comic sub-plot. The differences are, the last four are distinctly romantic and tragic in their serious parts; the first two are solved without serious results, though they might easily have ended fatally. The comedy

¹ *The Works of Thomas Middleton*; ed. by A. H. Bullen, vol. i, p. xv.

² *Chronicle of the English Drama*; F. G. Fleay, 2 vols. 1891.

³ *The Works of Thomas Middleton*; ed. by A. H. Dyce, 5 vols. 1840.

⁴ Article on *Thomas Middleton*, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, by C. H. Herford; vol. xxxvii.

⁵ *A History of English Dramatic Literature*; by A. W. Ward, 3 vols.; 1899; vol. ii, p. 501.

of the former two is prominent and from distinctly lower London life; that of the latter four is less prominent and concerns people of a higher station in life. Finally the appreciation and expression of the awfulness of wrong is distinctly better in the latter four than it is in the former two of these plays. Now a single reading of *The Old Law* will show that it belongs with *The Phoenix* and *Blurt, Master-Constable* rather than with *The Mayor of Queensborough* or with *The Witch*, not to mention the still more evidently later plays, *Women Beware Women* and *More Dissemblers besides Women*.

For the present purpose, then, the distinguishing characteristics of Middleton's early work will be derived from *Blurt, Master-Constable*, printed in 1602, and the six comedies printed or licensed for printing in 1607 and 1608; namely, *The Phoenix*, *Michaelmas Term*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Family of Love*, *Your Five Gallants*, and *A Mad World My Masters*.¹

In these plays approximately two-thirds of the matter is in prose, and one-third in dramatic or epic blank verse. A few songs, however, that have no real connection with the plays, are introduced here and there, as in *BMC*, I, 2, 209-216, where the pages remain after the action of the scene is over to sing for us. Another slight exception is found in the heroic couplets now and then occurring in *BMC*, *MW*, and *MT*. Yet this use of song and rime is by no means prominent in these plays; it merely shows Middleton's sympathy with the dominant forms of the drama, and his leaning toward the romantic and idealistic without the ability to give it adequate expression.

All this verse is pretty uniformly regular as to number of feet, and smooth in quality. It is sometimes noticeable, even, that poetical expression is kept at the expense of

¹ Hereafter these plays will be called respectively, *BMC*, *P*, *MT*, *TCO*, *FofL*, *YFG*, and *MW*.

naturalness and brevity. A somewhat exaggerated case, though really typical, is found in *FofL*, V, 2, 25-36, of which I quote the first five verses:

Gerardine?
Aurora, nor the blushing sun's approach,
Dart not more comfort to this universe
Than thou to me: most acceptably come!
The art of number cannot count the hours
Thou hast been absent.

This is not mere lover's hyperbole, but it is the writer's attempt to express in good verse a simple though passionate welcome from a girl to her lover. The response is similar and worse. An equally formal and almost antiphonal scene occurs in *YFG*, I, 2, 1-23. The antiphonal quality of this latter passage is rather unusual, but the formal fulness of the verse, almost if not quite padding, is thoroughly typical of Middleton's longer speeches. The most notable exceptions to this uniformity of verse are in *YFG*, which besides containing incomplete verses in several places, has eight double endings in sixteen lines in I, 2, 83-98. A few rough verses, too, are scattered through the plays, like *FofL*, IV, 2, 2:

Thou power predominate, more to be admir'd,

and some irregular ones, like line 97:

Is happiness sought by the gods themselves,

and like I, 1, 105, in *MW*:

Yet willingly embrace it—love to Harebrain's wife.

But with the exception of a few such lines, the verse errs on the side of dull regularity.

In the distribution of prose and verse, also, Middleton seems somewhat self-conscious. Dignified, serious topics, like love, honor, bravery, integrity, whether they are merely talked about by the characters or whether they are the domi-

nant influences in the action of the play, are almost always presented in verse. But the moment there is a change to the light and humorous, there is a change of form. The only important exceptions to this occur in *YFG*. These exceptions, however, cannot be allowed to weigh fully against the other plays for two reasons: first, the verse in these places is essentially unlike that in the other five plays; and second, although this play was licensed for printing in March, 1607-8, the quarto bears no date, so it may be much later and revised by another hand. A single passage to show the quality of the verse; IV, 8, 48-57:

When things are cleanly carried, sign of judgment:
 I was the welcom'st gallant to her alive
 After the salt was stolen; then a good dinner,
 A fine provoking meal, which drew on apace
 The pleasure of a day-bed, and I had it;
 This here one ring can witness: when I parted,
 Who but *sweet master Goldstone*? I left her in that trance.
 What cannot wit, so it be impudent,
 Devise and compass? I'd fain know that fellow now
 That would suspect me but for what I am.

A good example of a sudden change from verse to prose because of the change of theme, is found in *P*, I, 4. Up to line 197, since law has been treated humorously as the means of gulling some one, the speeches are all in prose; but the moment Phoenix begins speaking of law in a higher sense, the form becomes verse. A similar case may be found in *FofL*, V, 2, 39-42, where the change is made in the midst of a speech because Gerardine turns from talking to Maria of their approaching marriage, to ask her an ordinary question about some of the less dignified characters in the play:

At Dryfat's house, the merchant, there's our scene,
 Whose sequel, if I fail not in intent,
 Shall answer our desires and each content.
 But when sawest thou Lipsalve and Gudgeon, our two gallants?

Compare also the curious use of prose and verse in *BMC*, I, 1, 123-133, quoted on page 12.^c This practice of poetical

expression for the serious treatment of serious topics, or for increased effectiveness, is surprisingly constant throughout these plays.

Middleton's early prose is usually well written, adapted to the characters, and conversational. It is for the most part better adapted to its purpose than is the verse; he seems more at home with it. There are a few exceptions, like the euphuistic prose in *BMC*, I, 1, 100-104, and the stiff phrasing in some parts of the induction to *MT*; but on the whole, Middleton subordinates the means to the end better while using prose than while using verse. The reader is seldom, if ever, conscious of the style while the characters are talking his colloquial prose.

The people who occupy the important places in the plays are mostly from the lower ranks of society. They are the kind one would meet in Eastcheap or on the Bankside, excepting five people in *P*, and one of slight importance in *BMC*. These are two dukes, the son of a duke, and three nobles. Of these gentlemen, only Phoenix and one of the nobles are more than puppets in the play. Phoenix, to be sure, develops considerable character; he and his companion in disguise stand out in striking contrast to the law-breakers that make up the rest of the action. But Middleton is unable to keep him from becoming decidedly priggish in his search for the vices in his dukedom. The result is an unattractive hero. Two good instances of his priggishness are found in his apostrophes to law and to marriage. In the former case, Phoenix and his friend have been observing a perverter of the law in his dealings with simple people; the pettifogger is called out to see a captain, whereupon the friend asks, "What captain might this be?" Phoenix, rapt out of consciousness of the question, makes no reply but soliloquizes on law for thirty lines thus:

Thou angel sent amongst us, sober Law,
Made with meek eyes, persuading action,
No loud immodest tongue,

Voic'd like a virgin, and as chaste from sale,
 Save only to be heard, but not to rail;
 How has abuse deform'd thee to all eyes,
 That where thy virtues sat, thy vices rise! etc.

I, 4, 197-203.

At the end of the speech, the friend repeats his question with better results. The passage on marriage is in II, 2, 162-196. These elaborate monologues are as ill-timed as would be Henry V's speech "Upon the king," if it were to follow Falstaff's caricature of Henry IV, in the first part of the play by that name. It is evident, therefore, that Middleton was unable at this time to fit dignified people into his plays. He does not seem quite at home with them.

It is equally clear that Middleton was considerably interested in the lower classes; at all events, he handled them much better. His touch is sure and his appreciation is excellent when dealing with the common people. He must have known all kinds of men and women of the lower social stratum, from the young spendthrift, Witgood, who got back his squandered fortune by his wits, to Frippery, the broker gallant, who grew rich upon the prodigality of his friends; from the lascivious jeweler's wife, who secretly supported her "friend in court," to the keen-witted servant of the courtesan, who poured a pail of dirty water from an upper window upon the head of a too importunate old courtier. The perfect naturalness of the whole list of shrewd, reckless, good-natured, immoral characters is unmistakable.

The kind of people who are most prominent in these plays will no doubt account for the fact that in none of the seven is there a leading character who really wins our admiration. However attractive they may be in other parts of the play, without exception they somewhere do things or show characteristics that we cannot admire in a hero or a heroine. Not only does the modern reader feel this, but it is impossible to imagine a competent critic of the seventeenth century feeling otherwise. The failure to idealize Phoenix has already been

mentioned. In the same play Castiza is made an exemplary lady in most situations, but it is almost impossible to understand how she could have married the captain. After calling her a fool for marrying him, the captain sells her to a man who with the captain's consent has already tried to seduce her. Caught in the act of selling, the captain is arrested; whereupon Castiza says :

Who hath laid violence upon my husband,
My dear sweet captain? Help!

II, 2, 297-298.

In *FofL*, Gerardine and Maria would make an ideal pair of lovers in many ways, but they are obliged to hasten their marriage at the end of the play that their child may be born in wedlock. In *YFG*, Fitsgrave and Katherine keep their honor and are shrewd in their actions, but they are priggish in their moral superiority over their friends and associates. And so through the rest of the plays; not a single character wins unqualified sympathy. Of the two, the men are better understood than the women, but there is lack of full appreciation of human nature even among the people Middleton knew best.

The fact that there are no heroes or heroines in these plays does not imply that there are no interesting characters. Like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, the sharpers and the courtesans carry off the honors. If moral and ethical questions are disregarded, as of course they may be in comedy, there are some excellent people in these plays. There can be no doubt that the police force and Lazarillo in *BMC*, were irresistably funny on the stage. So were Falso and his servants, and Tangle in *P*. The exquisite scheming of Quomodo in *MT*, and his complete overthrow by the man he had wronged must have been very effective. And so on through a long list of people like the two old sharpers gulled in *TCO*, like the broker-gallant and the cheating-gallant in *YFG*, and like Sir Bounteous Progress and Follywit in *MW*. Here also, as in the case

of the more honest characters, the women fall below the men in naturalness; but I cannot help admiring the wit, energy, and good sense of the courtesan in *TCO*. Aside from the fact that she is called a courtesan, and is treated accordingly, her actions and character on the stage would place her on a level with the best in the play. She and Imperia in *BMC*, in spite of the stigma of their names, are the most interesting and life-like women in these plays. They are real people from the streets of London, full of interest because so thoroughly plausible.

Part of the interest felt in the characters of this class, is no doubt due to the fact that both the men and the women are quick in conversation, apt in repartee, and shrewd in all their dealings. The very fact that so many of them are professional gullers and cheats would make keen wits necessary. In five of the plays, all but *BMC* and *P*, the hero and the heroine win by the sharpest kind of scheming against no mean opponents. In *YFG*, as the name shows, there are five professionals whose only business is to show us how such fellows get their living out of the simpler people. In the two plays just excepted there is no lack of sharp practice, though the plot of the play does not hinge on these wit-contests. For instance, Falso's mock trial of his own servant, and Tangle's living upon the gullible court followers, in *P*, are really subordinated to the rest of the plot, but they are two of the most effective scenes in the play. The same is true of Imperia and her discarded suitors in *BMC*.

Considering the knowledge that Middleton seems to have had of the London lower life, it is surprising that his plays show so little appreciation of its serious aspect. Even recognizing the fact that most of this work is comedy, there still remain places where the serious side of that life can hardly be ignored. Whether he was unable to see it or unable to express it is not very clear. That the latter is likely to have been the difficulty is shown by such cases as that of Penitent Brothel and Mistress Harebrain in *MW*. Scene 2 of act III

could have been made just as effective without the actual sin, for that plays practically no part in the action. Middleton, however, allows the sin a place, and without doubt gains in realism thereby; then in his attempt to maintain ethical verity he makes the sinner repent, but in a most formal and categorical manner. So far Middleton seems merely to be unable to phrase a serious situation. But this passage is followed by the entrance of a Succubus in the form of the woman to tempt the repentant sinner back to his sin. At best it is very low melodrama;—but I have a strong suspicion that the audience thought it excellent burlesque. The temptation, as a serious matter, is as ridiculous as the speech of repentance is unnatural. A few lines will show the temper of the speech of repentance:

Nay, I that knew the price of life and sin,
 What crown is kept for continence, what for lust,
 The end of man, and glory of that end,
 As endless as the giver,
 To doat on weakness, slime, corruption, woman!
 What is she, took asunder from her clothes?
 Being ready, she consists of an hundred pieces,
 Much like your German clock, and near ally'd;
 Both are so nice, they cannot go for pride:
 Besides a greater fault, but too well known,
 They'll strike to ten, when they should stop at one.

IV, 1, 14-24.

In *FofL*, the case is somewhat different. There the serious side of life is entirely disregarded. All through the play we are led to understand that Glistar has had criminal relations with Mistress Purge. At the end of the play, however (V, 3, 400-428), the case is dismissed from a mock court, the only place where the guilty are called to account, with a little good advice and a promise to the injured husband that all will be well if he also will do as he ought. On the whole, therefore, it looks as though Middleton knew there was a serious side to this life, and as though he tried at times to express it; but he did not have a deep and genuine feeling

for the moral questions that unavoidably underlie the life he chose to portray.

The plots of these plays are realistic in method and motif; only in a slight degree are they romantic or tragic. On brief consideration, five of these plots seem to be little better than a stringing together of effective incidents: *P*, *MW*, *YFG*, *FofL*, and *BMC*. In *P*, for instance, Falso's abuse of justice especially in order to protect his disguised thieving servants, is well connected with his plan to detain his niece's dower. But these events have practically no connection with the half insane termor, Tangle, who is largely amusing because of his humorous gulling of others seeking their rights at law. The captain's attempt to prostitute his wife, and then, after failure in that, his attempt to sell her, are quite independent of the other two stories. And yet these varied incidents are mechanically unified by the fact that Phoenix, while investigating the vices of his dukedom, finds all of these abuses and corrects them. Thus the unifying element is really present, although quite secondary to the elements unified, for the Phoenix story is secondary in interest to at least three others in the play. However poor such a plot may be, there was plainly a carefully worked out plan at bottom. The plots of the other four plays show similar plan and similar looseness. In *TCO*, and in *MT*, however, there is developed a well balanced plot that of itself becomes interesting. The binding together is not in all places skilful, but for the most part it is effective. To a much greater extent than in the five plays first mentioned, these two plays not only arouse interest in the individual situations, but they make each situation increase the interest in the final solution.

Although in most of these early plays Middleton lacked a fine artistic sense in plot-construction, he showed remarkable ability in making effective scenes. Every play has at least two or three really excellent situations; and some plays are full of them, as *TCO*, and *MT*. That this fact is

due to his discrimination and not to chance is shown by the fact that not one of the seven plays is strong in plot and weak in situation, while five are weak in plot and strong in situation, and the other two are strong in plot and still stronger in situation. Middleton's regard for incident is still farther shown by the way effective scenes are introduced because they are effective regardless of their connection with the plot. There are a large number of these, as in *BMC*, III, 3, where Lazarillo reads a remarkable paper on the way women may get control of their husbands; or in *P*, where the principal purpose of the main plot is that a number of comic gulling scenes may be introduced; or in *FofL*, II, 3, and III, 2, in both of which Lipsalve and Gudgeon drop to pretty low comedy for the amusement of the pit, without advancing the plot at all; or in *MW*, III, 2, where the courtesan in mock illness entertains company and helps her friend to meet the merchant's wife almost under his very eyes, and in IV, 5, where she traps Follywit into marriage, neither of which scenes is vitally connected with an important main plot. It is, then, in his ability to choose the right kind of incidents, and to work them up into effective scenes, that Middleton showed the most promise in his early dramatic work.

The fact that these plays are all comedies, and also that in these plays character and plot are less artistically worked out than is incident, would naturally preclude the possibility of developing to any extent important themes. Some, however, are touched upon in a significant manner. Love is conventionally romantic, making the lover speak in all sorts of hyperboles, as in *BMC*, I, 1, 123-133:

My dear Violetta, one kiss to this picture of your whitest hand, when I was even faint with giving and receiving the dole of war, set a new edge on my sword, insomuch that

I singl'd out a gallant spirit of France,
And charged him with my lance in full career;
And after rich exchange of noble courage,

(The space of a good hour on either side),
 At last crying, Now for Violetta's honour!
 I vanquished him and him dismounted took,
 Not to myself, but prisoner to my love.

Similar extravagant passages are found in *FofL*, I, 2, 53-57, and 99-102. But this romantic love never becomes the central interest of the play; it is rather subordinated to other things. The brevity of its presentation is well shown in the case of Fidelio and Falso's niece (she has no name) in *P*. The niece is given only about fifty lines divided into less than half as many speeches, and all occurring in five appearances on the stage. The most prominent romance is that of Gerardine and Maria in *FofL*. Here the woman appears ten times, but with no lines the last time, though it is the scene in which her troubles cease and she is promised to her lover in marriage. During the other nine appearances she has fifty-one speeches, making in all 208 lines or about four pages of the 108 pages of the play. Of these fifty-one speeches, sixteen have only one line, and but five have ten lines or more. Certainly romantic love is not given a prominent part in these plays, even though it might have been used to advantage in some instances.

The opportunities for pathos are not numerous, and where they occur, are handled with only moderate skill. In one of the best plays, *MT*, there are two cases somewhat alike; a father follows a wayward daughter to London, and grieves over her fall, while he in disguise and not recognizing her serves her in her life of sin; and a mother who has been deserted by a worthless son, follows him to London, and without knowing it though recognized by the son, serves as his drudge and pander. These two situations are practically the only ones in which Middleton even suggests the real pathos that underlay the life he was portraying. And even in these two instances the pathos is not emphasized, and may not have been noticed by the Elizabethans; at most it is only suggested.

The principle involved in these plays, almost without exception, can be stated thus: the end plus a small amount of repentance, no matter how sudden, will justify the means and bring assured happiness to all. The only exceptions are that Proditor in *P* is banished for treason, the thieving boy and the bawd-gallant in *YFG* are whipped, and in several places men who have seduced women or lived with them unlawfully are compelled to marry them. But those who receive even such punishment are few and insignificant, in comparison with those who are forgiven for much worse crimes on promise of better behavior.

In connection with these peculiarities of theme and treatment, it should be distinguished that the result is unmoral rather than immoral. Seldom if ever does the language fall from the ordinary sixteenth century coarseness to obscenity. To the modern mind the humor is often vulgar and the expression direct, but it is never salacious. The worst cases occur in *FofL*, IV, 1, and V, 1; but quotations will not show the temper of these scenes, they must be read entire. It will then be seen that attention is all the time centered upon shrewd devices and keen repartee, not upon the sin, the alluring quality of which has not been suggested. It must be admitted, however, that these two cases are very near the danger point of twentieth century English morals, though they are quite in line with certain French comedy, such as *The Girl from Maxim's*. Moreover there is a noticeable absence of noise and horseplay like that in *The Comedy of Errors*. In no place is physical discomfort or suffering introduced solely for the sake of humor, as so frequently they are in the contemporary farce comedy. The nearest approach to this is when the cowardly Pursenet, in *YFG*, in attempting a robbery sets upon the wrong man and receives a drubbing for his pains; and when Curvetto, in *BMC*, becomes too assiduous in his attentions to Simperina, and receives a bucket of water from an upper window; or when Lazarillo, in the same play, receives somewhat similar treatment. On

the contrary, the fun is all worked out by the wits in devising comic situations and shrewd solutions. In these two things Middleton must have idealized the life to which he was otherwise so faithful.

Although Middleton for the most part seems to have gone directly to contemporary life for his material, it is not at all unusual to find rather surprising echoes of familiar Shakespearean lines and scenes. Compare *BMC*, I, 1, 194-196 :

Lady, bid him whose heart no sorrow feels
Tickle the rushes with his wanton heels:
I've too much lead in mine,

with *Romeo and Juliet*, I, 4, 35-36 :

Let wantons, light of heart,
Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels.

In at least three plays there are resemblances that extend to whole situations. In *FofL*, I, 2, 71 ff., Maria appears at the window and talks of her love for Gerardine, not knowing that he hears, in a manner that is strongly suggestive of Act II, scene 2, in *Romeo and Juliet*. Lethe in *MT*, I, 1, 257 ff., has a remarkable resemblance to Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*. In *BMC*, I, 2, 50 ff., IV, 3, 11 ff., and V, 3, entire, Blurt and his assistants show more than a chance resemblance to Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*. For the present purpose it matters little which way the borrowing occurs; the important thing is the frequent resemblance to situations and lines in Shakespeare.

In brief, Middleton's characteristics in his early works are as follows: His prose is natural and colloquial; his verse is regular, smooth, padded in places, but seldom lyrical. The most sympathetically handled characters show him especially interested in the people of the lower ranks of society and the slums of London. The heroes and heroines do not win full sympathy, but they are decidedly interesting. Plots are carefully but inartistically constructed, and the

incidents are dramatically effective. Endless gulling is the main theme, aided by conventional romantic love and good-natured sin duly repented of. These are treated unmorally and thoughtlessly, not immorally and seductively. There is notable absence of pathos and burlesque comedy. Finally, there are frequent suggestions of Shakespearean lines and incidents.

II.

The only plays assigned in the early editions to William Rowley alone, are *A New Wonder; a Woman Never Vexed*, printed in 1632, *All's Lost by Lust*, printed in 1633, *A Match at Midnight*,¹ printed in 1633, and *A Shoemaker's a Gentleman*, printed in 1638. The last of these has not been accessible to me, so only the first three are considered in this study. Of these three, only *ALL* has been accepted by later critics as being undoubtedly by Rowley alone. The genuineness of *WNV* is not doubted by Mr. Thomas Seccomb,² or by Mr. A. W. Ward;³ but Mr. Fleay⁴ thinks that the original play was by Heywood. In regard to *MatM*, Mr. Bullen says, "I strongly favour Mr. Fleay's view that Rowley merely altered it (*circ.* 1622) for a revival, and that the real author was Middleton. It is written very much in the style of Middleton's early comedies of intrigue."⁵ Mr. A. W. Ward and Mr. Thomas Seccomb give no opinion; but the assertion by Mr. Bullen has been carefully considered by Miss P. G. Wiggin.⁶ She concludes that there is not sufficient reason to doubt the assertion of the first edition,

¹ These plays will hereafter be referred to respectively as *WNV*, *ALL*, and *MatM*.

² Article on William Rowley, in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ *A History of English Dramatic Literature*; vol. ii, p. 543.

⁴ *Chronicle of the English Drama*; vol. ii, p. 103.

⁵ *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, edited by A. H. Bullen; vol. i, p. lxxix.

⁶ *An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Middleton-Rowley Plays*; Boston, 1897; pp. 7-13.

that Rowley wrote the play. For the present purpose, therefore, it will be assumed that *ALL* furnishes undisputed evidence, and that *WNV* and *MatM* furnish very strong contributory evidence as to the characteristics of Rowley's dramatic work.

These three plays show Rowley in three different styles of composition. *WNV* has a tragic main plot and comic sub-plot, with the tragic element resolved without disaster. *MatM* is a realistic comedy of London lower life. *ALL* is a tragedy of blood with a slight romantic element and a few comic scenes for contrast. The first two plays are, therefore, like the seven early Middleton plays in plot; the last belongs to an entirely different class of drama.

Considering the divergence of material and method in these plays, there is a remarkable agreement in style. Each play contains both prose and verse: *MatM* is all prose except about 130 lines, the other two plays are largely verse. The prose style is not marked by any distinguishing characteristics. It is colloquial and direct, well expressing the kind of people who utter it. The verse, however, is quite different; that has qualities of its own. Although there are a few rimed lines, they are not numerous, and lyric effects are practically unknown in these plays. On the contrary the blank verse is rugged, vigorous, often noisy; as though Rowley were trying to produce the Marlowesque effect without the poetical power to give resonance to the verse. When excited people try to "do it in King Cambyzes' vein," their verses usually trip them, as in *WNV*, act III, end:

MrsF. No, no, 'tis thine, thou wretch; and therefore
 Let me turn my vengeance all on thee; thou
 Hast made hot haste to empty all my warehouses,
 And made room for that the sea hath drunk before thee.

.
 May serpents breed,
 And fill this fated stream, and poison her forever.

OFos. O curse not; they come too fast!

Mrs.F. Let me curse somewhere, wretch, or else I'll throw
Them all on thee; 'tis thou, ungodly slave,
That art the mark unto the wrath of heaven :
I thriv'd ere I knew thee.

Such lines as these are frequent, in which smoothness of verse and rhythm are sacrificed to rather bombastic vigor.

In order to avoid needless repetition, comparison of Rowley's verse with that of Middleton will be omitted till after the study of Massinger's characteristics, when all three men will be considered together. The other characteristics of Rowley will be taken up in direct relation with those of Middleton. This direct comparison of the two men is made desirable because they dealt with such similar situations and worked with such similarity of method that the differences are often in degree rather than in kind. These differences, of course, can be illustrated only, not proved; but the illustrations can be made with similar passages, and therefore will carry some force as indications of method.

The difference in vulgarity can be seen by comparing the process by which Witgood gulls Hoard into marrying his courtesan, in Middleton's *TCO*, and a similar gulling process in *MatM*, where Tim Bloodgood marries a whore and his father barely escapes the same fate with a bawd. In *TCO*, but for the fact that the woman is called a courtesan, and is now and then spoken of as having been Witgood's mistress, the reader would hardly suspect her character. In the play itself she says and does nothing which the Chaste Maid in *Cheapside* might not have said and done. The absence of vulgar allusion and of suggestive details, and the constant keeping to the front of the shrewdness of the tricks by which the old men are gulled, are surprising if we consider the real character of the people concerned. Compare this phrasing with that of the situations in *MatM*. In the latter play the audience is never allowed to forget the character of the bawd and whore, although they have names to cover somewhat their character. Every time they appear they are

in their parts, from the time when they capture Tim at the tavern to the time when Mrs. Coote is taken in the chamber with Ear-lack, and then with Sue Shorthheels sent away to prison. Their language is constantly suggestive or salacious. The nearest to Sue and Mrs. Coote that Middleton has done, is the courtesan in *MW*. But there is a marked difference even here. Middleton draws the attention of the audience to the keen wit shown by the courtesan in deceiving the jealous husband and in getting rid of the troublesome suitors, not to the things that are actually going on. In Rowley's play attention is drawn to the vulgarity or indecency of the situation; in Middleton's, attention is centered upon the humor that attends the situation. This is a distinct difference in method, whatever it may be in morals.

This difference is fully borne out by certain scenes in *ALL*. In act I, Roderick considers it necessary to employ a bawd. She is brought upon the stage and examined as to her qualifications, with no other result than to make some vulgar jests. There is absolutely no development of character or furtherance of plot or real humor of situation. Again in the beginning of act II, she and Lothario amuse the pit with jests about their occupations in lines quite devoid of any kind of wit or humor; they have nothing but their ribaldry to excuse their existence. In short, Rowley seems to introduce vulgar situations for their own sake, but Middleton because they can be made the basis for genuine humor.

Another noticeable characteristic of Rowley is his constant punning. His manner of using puns to eke out action or in place of it is well shown by comparing two gambling scenes. One is in act II of *WNV*, and the other in act II, scene 3, of *YFG*. The entire action of the former scene is as follows: While the men are playing at dice and quarreling, the host of the tavern has to go below to quiet the bowlers. Soon after his return he has to quiet the card players above. Meanwhile the dicers keep on playing and commenting on their poor plays and quarreling. While the host is gone

the second time, the dicers fall to fighting over the false dice, whereupon the host and some friends of the hero come in and stop the fight. During the brawl the bowlers come in and steal the cloaks of the dicers. While the owners are in hot dispute with the host about the lost cloaks, in come some more friends of the hero, and the real action of the play is resumed. Thus 160 lines are used merely to catch the hero at dice, regardless of the fact that we all know him to be a confirmed gambler. The noise below and above, the fight, the cheating at play, the loss of the cloaks,—all of this has no other use than to let us find the hero in bad company in order that the action may begin. This passage has absolutely no value in itself, and is carried merely by tiresome and persistent punning. In the first thirty-six lines there are no less than nine plays upon words. Their quality may be judged by the following :

Steph. Seven still, pox on't! that number of the deadly sins
haunts me damnably. Come, sir, throw.

Jack. Prythee, invoke not so: all sinks too fast already.

Hugh. It will be found again in mine host's box. [*The dice are thrown.*]

Jack. In still, two thieves and choose thy fellow.

Steph. Take the miller.

Jack. Have at them, i' faith.

Hugh. For a thief, I'll warrant you; who'll you have next?

Jack. Two quatres and a trey.

Steph. I hope we shall have good cheer, when two caters and a tray go to market.

The larger part of the conversation is just such a weak attempt to take up the words of the last speaker and turn them in some witty way. Apart from this word-play fully one half of the 160 lines have no reason to exist.

Although the scene in *YFG* is much longer it really seems less padded because it is all the time furthering the plot of the play. Every scrap of conversation and every bit of action help us to a better understanding of the moral character of the persons concerned, and accomplish this end in a witty or humorous manner. Whether or not such a plot is good,

is not the question here. For instance, in II, 3, 83-104, Bungler explains in a really humorous dialogue, how he has schooled himself to forget whom he would. Lines 50-62, in which Goldstone tries to steal the beakers and gets caught, would make excellent acting. Lines 141 and following, in which Goldstone and his servant manage to fleece the whole company by Goldstone's pretending to be angry that his servant should dare to offer to play with them, is effectively handled. So of all the other situations, notably of the last, in which Goldstone gets away with a large gold cup by not desiring to mistrust anyone there, but by preferring to pay the host his share of its value of it rather than have all the company searched.

The same difference between Rowley and Middleton is evident from the witty scenes in *ALL*. In this play, puns are the stock form of humor for the clown, and they are the principal form of conversation between Antonio and Dionisia. In the latter case they are supposed to represent polite conversation which is to result in the two participants falling in love with each other, as in act II :

- Dio.* Worthy sir,
My noble father entreats some words with you.
- Ant.* A happy messenger invites me to him.
How shall I quit your pains?
- Dio.* I'll take my travil for't sir.
- Ant.* 'Tis too little.
- Dio.* I think it too much, sir,
For I was loath to travel thus far, had not
Obedience tied me to't.
- Ant.* You're too quick.
- Dio.* Too quick, sir; why, what occasion have I given you
To wish me dead?
- Ant.* I cannot keep this pace with you, lady.
I'll go speak with your father?
- Dio.* I pray stay, sir, I'll speak with you myself.
- Ant.* Before your father?
- Dio.* No, here in private, by yourself.
- Laz.* I'll stop my ears, madam.
- Dio.* Why, are they running away from your head, sir?

Laz. I mean I'll seal them up from hearing, lady.

Dio. You may: no doubt they have wax of their own.

Such passages, and a good many of them, show pretty clearly that Rowley believed in punning as a legitimate means of humor, and that he allowed it to carry him quite away from the purpose of the scene.

Rowley's humorous scenes are also helped out in many places by rather noisy action if not by burlesque. In *MatM*, Captain Carvegut and Alexander Bloodhound are swash-bucklers when they dare act their purposes, as is well shown in the tavern scene or in the first visit of Alexander to the Widow. The Clown in *WNV* is exceedingly noisy in his objection to his mistress' marriage, and equally so in his final acceptance of his new master. Similarly in *ALL*, in the beginning of the last act, when the kingdom of Spain is tottering to its fall, in comes Lothario, the king's gentleman pander, with a rope around his neck, scared almost to suicide but lacking the courage to end his own life. He meets the Clown who refuses to help him out of the world, so they make horse-play fun for the audience, and retire. In a word, then, Rowley's humorous scenes contain weak punning, noise, and coarse jest, while Middleton uses real wit in humorous action.

In the matter of plot construction, the difference between Rowley and Middleton is one of conscious method rather than of result. Both men seem to have striven for effective situations at the expense of proportion or consistency of plot. In the tragic part of *WNV* there is a notable lack of causation. One cannot help wondering just why Brewen should be so willing to sell his half interest in the commercial venture when the ships have returned as far as Dover, and when his share of the profits is known to be worth twice what he sold for. It is a strange coincidence that the ships should all be lost at the Thames mouth just after the bargain was made. Next, one is surprised that the widow should be so anxious to marry a worthless fellow merely to be vexed once in her life;

and then comes the startling information that the worthless fellow has become a most exemplary husband. Finally, one is a little surprised at the way the father casts off his son for helping the uncle; but that is not a circumstance to the perversity with which the father refuses to believe that his son really wants to help him in his trouble, even when the son stands ready to offer the best of proof of his sincerity. The father is merely mad with anger at nothing except that, as in the other cases, the plot requires him to be so or the play will stop. In *MatM*, the scheme of gulling is better worked out for the most part, though it is a little hard to explain the relation of seven alternating appearances and exits of Randall on the one hand and of Captain Carvegut and Lieutenant Bottum on the other. At best these are a very clumsy stage device to explain a part of the play that is to follow. Otherwise the scenes work up well to the inevitable conclusion of such a play,—namely, the punishment of the wicked, the gulling of the father and old lover, and the marrying of the faithful girl and her young lover.

A slightly different phase of this tendency in Rowley to sacrifice consistency and unity of plot to effectiveness of situation is shown in *ALL*. As was said earlier, there is no apparent reason for Malina's appearance in the first act except that her vulgar jests will please the pit. There is reason against it in that it is out of keeping with the character of a king who has won the implicit confidence of such a general as Julianus. The same criticism holds of her appearance with Lothario in the beginning of the second act. Such a vulgarization of the rape of Jacinta is not consistent with the attitude of Julianus toward his king, and there is no reason why Julianus should not know the character of the king. To the same kind of carelessness is due the loose binding together of the two parts of the plot. Whether or not they are taken directly from the original story is not in point here; the fact is that the plot is made up of two quite different stories, with a purely mechanical unification. The three points of contact

between the story of Antonio and his two wives and the story of Julianus and his ravished daughter are as follows: the two men go to the same war; both are present at the conference with a captain of the forces of a neighboring city at which Antonio, already married to a poor girl at home, falls in love with the captain's daughter; at the end of the play, Antonio comes upon the stage to die as the result of a wound given him by Julianus because he had upbraided Julianus with the fall of their kingdom. Thus only at one point, and that a very slight one, does one story influence the other.

A brief consideration of *BMC* will show how Middleton has woven a main plot and sub-plot together. In the main plot, Fontinelle, a war-prisoner of Camillo, falls in love with Violetta, the fiancée of Camillo, and marries her. In the sub-plot, Curvetto, an old courtier, and Lazarillo, an eccentric Spaniard, make love to Imperia, a courtesan, and her servant. Frisco is another servant of Imperia, and Hippolito is the brother of Violetta. Now Camillo and Hippolito try to use Imperia and Frisco to entrap Fontinelle, and so to cure Violetta of her love for him by showing his love for the courtesan. By this means Frisco is able to help Fontinelle to escape from prison and to marry Violetta. Then Lazarillo and Curvetto, who at first seem to serve only for the sport of the audience, bring about a situation where they call out the city guard just in time to prevent Camillo and Hippolito from forcibly entering Imperia's house in search of Fontinelle and Violetta, whom they intend to murder. Similarly in *P*, each part of the sub-plot bears directly upon the main plot. There is evidently a plan underlying both these plays, however unwise and inartistic. The difference between the two dramatists is indicated by the difference between *ALL* and *BMC*. The former is more mechanical in its putting together, but more plausible and clear on the stage; the latter is more carefully devised, but less clear on the stage. One was the result of stage experience and not much careful forethought; the other, of forethought but not much stage experience.

Middleton overcame his difficulty, as is shown in *TCO*; there is no evidence that Rowley ever worked out a better plot than that in *MatM*, which at best is a poor imitation of the play by Middleton just named.

In his vigorous attitude toward life, Rowley is quite different from Middleton. For instance, Sue Shortheels and Mrs. Coote are both sent off to jail in *MatM* after they have served their purpose in gulling the more respectable persons,—a thing not heard of in Middleton, where they would have repented in their last few lines. In *WNV*, also, there is a more intense feeling toward the wrongdoers. At times, to be sure, it becomes little better than coarse vituperation, yet it represents a vigor of mind not found in Middleton's early work. This difference is shown by comparing the language used by Hoard and Lucre in their quarrel in *TCO*, I, 3, 3–16, with that used by Mrs. Foster and Old Foster in *WNV*, act I, p. 104. This same virility produces pathos in some instances, as in *ALL*, act II :

Jac. Remember what my father does for you,
He's gone to brandish gainst your enemies,
He's fetching your honour home; while at home
You will dishonour him.

Rod. My purpose 'twas,
To send him forth the better to achieve
My conquest here.

Jac. Tyrannous, unkingly.

Rod. Tush, I have no cares.

Jac. He'll be revenged.

Rod. Pity, nor future fears—

Jac. Help, help, some good hand help !

Rod. There's none within thy call.

Jac. Heaven hears.

Rod. Tush, 'tis far off.

So far the scene is deeply pathetic; but then Rowley drops to the conventional rime-tags for the end of the scene and consequently becomes bathetic :

Jac. See heaven, a wicked king, lust stains his crown,
Or strike me dead, or throw a vengeance down.

Rod. Tush, heaven is deaf, and hell laughs at thy cry.

Jac. Be cursed in the act, and cursed die.

Rod. I'll stop the rest within thee. [*Exit dragging her.*]

All this vigor of feeling, whether in the form of bombastic vituperation, or pathos, or bathos, is quite different from the more elaborately and carefully expressed feeling of Middleton's early work.

To summarize: The differences between Middleton and Rowley in the plays where they used the same kind of materials and sought the same results, are substantiated by a consideration of Rowley's tragedy. Rowley's verse is less regular, less rhythmical than Middleton's; his treatment of vulgar themes is coarser and more salacious; thin punning and noise are made to help out the comedy in place of genuine wit and humor; the plots and characters show less thought, but are quite as plausible on the stage; finally, Rowley's greater vigor is shown in his more intense attitude toward life and the resulting pathos or rant as the case may be.

III.

The qualities of Massinger's dramatic style are so generally agreed upon that they can be illustrated from three typical plays with a few references to others. The three referred to are, *The Duke of Milan*, a tragedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, a comedy, and *The Great Duke of Florence*, a tragi-comedy. Reference will now and then be made to *The City Madam*, a tragi-comedy, and to *The Maid of Honour*,¹ a tragi-comedy that ends rather seriously. Mr. A. W. Ward² and Mr. Robert Boyle³ think there is a suggestion of Fletcher in *NWD*, but do not feel at all certain that he helped Massinger in writing the play. There has also been some doubt about

¹ Hereafter these plays will be referred to respectively as *DofM*, *NWD*, *GDF*, *CM*, and *MofH*.

² *A History of English Dramatic Literature*; vol iii, p. 21.

³ Article on *Philip Massinger*, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

CM, but Mr. Ward¹ concludes that the play is all by Massinger. For present purposes, therefore, I shall assume that these plays are all by Massinger; they certainly are sufficiently alike to warrant that conclusion without a more careful investigation of all of Massinger's work than has yet been made.

The general characteristics of these plays may be stated as follows: the style is self-conscious, parenthetical, elaborate, Latinized, but for the most part accurate; all of the plays show more or less of a romantic tendency; the principal characters belong to the nobility, even in the comedy; the plots are carefully worked out, with a proper explanation of everything unusual; there is a good general understanding of human nature without the power to phrase it, hence the stiffness of some situations and the elephantine humor; there is clearly a didactic purpose, however unethical may be the means by which it is attained. Wherein these characteristics are like those of Middleton (in the seven early plays) and those of Rowley, and wherein they are unlike, will be noticed as these qualities are developed.

Massinger's sentences are accurately constructed, but they are such as no mortal ever spoke off the stage. A single sentence from *DofM* will illustrate a constant practice with him; act III, scene 3:

Therefore, madam,
(Though I shall ever look on you as on
My life's preserver, and the miracle
Of human pity,) would you but vouchsafe,
In company, to do me those fair graces
And favours, which your innocence and honour
May safely warrant, it would to the duke,
I being to your best self alone known guilty,
Make me appear most innocent.

Such sentences are plainly the product of the study, and show a better Latin than English idiom. The verse is also accurate in number of syllables, but lacking in feeling for

¹*A History of English Dramatic Literature*; vol. iii, p. 34.

rhythm. The most noticeable thing about the verse is the number of double endings, the prosaic quality, and the absence of incomplete verses. The verses quoted above show in a brief example how prosaic pretty regular verse can be, though in the next to the last verse the accents will not be placed so that any rhythm whatever can be felt. And yet, in spite of the lack of poetic feeling in some of the lines, most of them will read easily if the reader does not try to torture them into verse. They would make good rhythmical prose.

As in the case of Rowley, the consideration of Massinger's verse (he wrote practically no prose) in connection with Middleton's will be omitted for the present to avoid repetition.

The romantic element occupies practically all the action in *DofM*, in *MofH*, and in *GDF*. In the other two plays it is less prominent; yet the love episode of Allworth and the daughter of Sir Giles Overreach is carried on in a thoroughly romantic manner, with a feared rival who turns out to be a helpful friend, with the proper deception of an objecting father, and with a midnight elopement, all of which occupy a large part of our interest and of the *dénouement*. Similarly in *CM*, although the whole plot is made to center upon the marriage of the two daughters of the City Madam, and although the main moral lesson comes from the conquered pride of the mother, the main interest is in the methods by which the father and two lovers overcome that pride in the mother and daughters. So that, although these are not really romantic plays, they have a strong romantic tendency. Since Middleton introduced only a slight romantic element into his early plays but developed a stronger romantic tendency in his later work, and since Rowley showed rather more of a romantic tendency than did Middleton, this cannot be taken as a hard and fast mark of distinction between the three men; but it is so much more prominent in Massinger, that it is safe to say that he was more inclined to use romantic material than Rowley, and Rowley more than Middleton.

As is likely to happen in romance, the people in Massinger's plays are of excellent social standing. In three of these plays, kings, dukes, lords, and noble women occupy practically all our attention. But even in the other two, we are not among the common people. *NWD* has its duke, noble lady and her son, an extortioner who is "Sir" Giles, and a prodigal carefully named Wellborn lest we mistake him for a common fellow. *CM*, intended to teach proper humility in the wife of a rich city merchant, very carefully knights the merchant, marries one of the daughters to the son of a lord, and marries the other to a landed gentleman of parts. This care to give each play a proper social standing (and most of the other plays do not differ from these) is a distinct point of difference from Middleton and Rowley. In his early plays Middleton's interest was plainly with the common people. Rowley seems about equally divided in interest; but Massinger is almost entirely concerned with the nobility, or at the lowest, with people of gentle birth.

That Massinger worked out his plots with care is a fact generally accepted by critics. Indeed they are sometimes too elaborate: they smell of the midnight lamp. Such a romance as that in *GDF* is more like a military campaign between two brilliant generals, than like the perverse ways of romantic Cupid. Every important incident is carefully thought out and logically provided for. What else could Sanazarro do, since his love for the duchess was only lukewarm, than fall in love with the peerless Lidia! Then after he had found that Lidia loved another, and that the duchess had saved him from the angered duke, he very naturally discovered that he could love the duchess. There is no reason to doubt such fickleness in romance; moreover, Massinger has provided all the reasons and circumstances that make it possible; yet somehow the phrasing of the parts is not convincing. The actions are logical enough in their general trend, but the speeches are not phrased to suit the action. The details do not make plausible the general

outline Massinger has planned. So too of Bertoldo, in *MofH*. He could not well help loving the beautiful and pure Camiola; but when she had refused him absolutely, and when he had been away from her for some months, and when he was persistently wooed by the superb Duchess of Sienna, what could he do but accept her love and her dukedom! But here again, as in *GDF*, although the larger parts of the incidents are provided for, the individual speeches do not ring true. Massinger seems rather to have argued out what they should say than to have felt what people must have said. He could outline human action, but could not phrase it in detail.

Massinger's care in plot-construction is sometimes frustrated by lack of emphasis in the presentation of motives. For instance, the reader is hardly prepared, and much less the audience, for the malicious hatred of Francisco for Sforza in *DofM*. Not till the first few lines of the fifth act, though the revenge has been in progress since the middle of the second act, do we know the real motive for this specially honored favorite becoming the secret enemy of his patron. Then it is fully explained that Duke Sforza has ruined and cast off the sister of Francisco, and that Francisco is avenging his family honor. The fact was mentioned before, but so obscurely that no one would suspect its connection with Francisco's action. It looks, therefore, as though Massinger had planned well enough, but had misjudged the effect of the speech which he so carefully inserted as the plot-causation.

It is probably because of such seeming confusion in method, but really inadequate phrasing, that one critic says, "He rewards his good people and punishes the bad with the most scrupulous care; but the good or bad person at the end of the play is not always the good or bad person of the beginning."¹ Of course, no one would expect him to be; so I suppose the critic means that we are often surprised at the end of the play to learn who it is that has come out bad, and who has come

¹ Massinger's Plays. Mermaid ed., vol. i, p. xviii.

out good. This is without doubt true ; but the good and bad at the end were all arranged for in the plan, and a careful search will usually discover the reason for their change. The fault, then,—and it appears again in a still different form in his character-presentation,—is one of execution, not of plan.

In this carefulness of plot-construction, Massinger is followed at a little distance by Middleton, and at a much greater distance by Rowley. The difference between Massinger and Middleton is, that Massinger knew what constituted a good plot but could not phrase it, while Middleton lacked judgment as to what constituted a good plot. Rowley, on the other hand, seems not to have had much of a plan in mind, but to have trusted to his characters and his own instinct to work out the plot as necessity required.

It is doubtless because of Middleton's inability to make inevitable phrases that his characters fail in plausibility in a crisis. The more passionate they become, the longer and more declamatory their speeches. Thought does not answer thought, and feeling flash out into lasting phrase, even as vitally as they do in real life, not to mention what we expect in imaginative work. For instance, when Sanazarro, in *GDF*, secures a private interview with Lidia with whom he is desperately in love, he turns away after eight lines of purely formal compliment, and speaks three long asides of five, thirteen, and eleven lines respectively balancing three long embarrassed speeches by her. Another good case is at the end of act II of *DofM*, where occurs the temptation of Marcelia by Francisco. As has already been said, it is logical in general outline but quite unnatural in detail. The speeches are about such as two disinterested persons might use if they were debating the opposite sides of the question ; but no shrewd man, seeking revenge, would try to seduce the devoted wife of his over-trustful patron with the words of Francisco, and no woman of Marcelia's character would reply with her words. He begins with general flattery, follows that speech with more specific compliment, then in his third speech makes a plain

statement of his love. It looks logical and natural ; but the words are impossible in the mouths of both people. Act II, scene 1 :

Farewell, circumstance !

And since you are not pleased to understand me,
But by a plain and usual form of speech ;
All superstitious reverence laid by,
I love you as a man, and, as a man,
I would enjoy you. Why do you start, and fly me ?
I am no monster, and you but a woman,
A woman made to yield, and by example
Told it is lawful : favours of this nature
Are, in our age, no miracles in the greatest ;
And therefore, lady—

After this astounding proposition, the woman, who has been so far pictured as passionately devoted to her husband, remains to argue the matter for five pages more with this man, and answers :

Keep off!—O you Powers!—

Libidinous beast ! and, add to that, unthankful !
A crime, which creatures wanting reason fly from.
Are all the princely bounties, favours, honours,
Which, with some prejudice to his own wisdom,
Thy lord and raiser hath conferred upon thee,
In three days' absence, buried ? Hath he made thee,
A thing obscure, almost without a name,
The envy of great fortunes ? Have I graced thee,
Beyond thy rank, and entertained thee, as
A friend, and not a servant ? and is this,
This impudent attempt to taint mine honour,
The fair return of both our ventured favours !

These speeches are entirely unnatural ; and yet one cannot but feel that the general situation was properly conceived. Mas-singer seems to understand the voluntary and involuntary motives of human action ; he seems to have a wide acquaintance with human life ; he understands the natural sequence of events ; but he is unable to conceive of the individual actuated by individualistic motives and to give plausible expression to the resulting action. Naturalness of expression, the inevitable word for the particular situation, is rare in Mas-

singer. One cannot help feeling that the previously prepared outline of the plot was more keenly in his mind than the characters, and that attention to details of plan killed spontaneity of speech. Besides trying to say what they feel, the characters are burdened with the plot.

The differences between Massinger, Middleton, and Rowley in character presentation, are: Rowley does not elaborate his speeches more than the immediate needs of the situation require. Middleton's comedy characters are realistic to quite as great an extent as Rowley's, but his serious characters are inclined to be stilted. Massinger's characters are persistently self-conscious and periphrastic. Though Massinger and Middleton are somewhat alike in their presentation of serious characters, there is greater plausibility of speech in Middleton's work.

Self-consciousness of expression goes through all of Massinger's plays, and naturally kills the humor. The cook, the steward, the foolish gallant, are all watching their words too closely to be really funny. They have no abandon, they cannot get away from the plot. Just as we think some genuine humor is coming, it is either turned to a moral purpose, as when Tapwell, in *NWD*, receives a merited beating for his malicious abuse of Wellborn; or it is made to promote the serious part of the play, as when Sylli, in *MofH*, becomes a sort of antic foil to Camiola, so that she is able to give the audience some necessary information without resorting to soliloquy. In comedy, then, more than in anything else, Massinger is incapable of the keen wit and delightful humor of Middleton, and the boisterous fun of Rowley.

That Massinger had a pretty definite moral to teach, he seldom leaves to chance to discover. For instance, of the ten plays in the Mermaid edition, eight announce the moral in so many words, as in *Believe as You List*:

May my story
Teach potentates humility, and instruct
Proud monarchs, though they govern human things,
A greater power does raise, or pull down, kings!

And the teaching of the other two cannot be very deeply hidden, since *The Virgin Martyr* is usually taken as strong evidence that Massinger was a Roman Catholic; and *GDF*, although it forgives all the wrongdoers in the last few lines, does so with this caution:

Yet let not others
That are in trust and grace, as you have been,
By the example of our lenity,
Presume upon their sovereign's clemency.

The moral tag is missed only by a hair. In this attention to the moral teaching, Massinger is quite like Rowley, but unlike Middleton. Middleton carefully deals out repentance or punishment,—usually repentance,—to every erring one in the plays, but he does not try to make a sweeping application of the lessons to life. Rowley, like Massinger, gives prominence to the moral lesson, by making it the name of one play, and by tacking it to the end of the other two. The difference is that Massinger and Rowley are verbally didactic, while Middleton is so pervasively.

IV.

All I have said heretofore about the verse of Middleton, of Rowley, and of Massinger, was based upon general impressions from reading their plays, and could be only illustrated by examples, not proved. In order to verify these impressions, I have made a careful analysis of the verse in several plays. The figures given below are the result of that analysis.

One hundred lines of verse were taken from each of nine plays: Middleton's *BMC*, *MT*, *P*, and *A Game at Chess*; Rowley's *MatM*, *WNV*, and *ALL*; and Massinger's *DofM*, and *NWD*. In *MatM*, I have used all of the verse but about twenty or thirty lines, some of which are doubtful. In the other eight plays, I arbitrarily decided to take the first twenty lines of verse in each act.

After marking the lines as it seemed to me they should be read, I made a note of the following facts: 1. Elision, except of *-e-* in *-ed* and such usual ones as *I'll*, *I've*, *e'en*, etc. Under elision I have counted only the loss of a vowel that did not carry with it a consonant, and the loss of *-e* in *the*; as in *char(i)ty*, *trul(y) intending*, *walk th(e) horses*, etc. 2. Resolution of syllables; this means the breaking of one syllable into two, sometimes because of a vocalic consonant, as *em-bl-em*, *he-re*, etc., where the verse needed an extra syllable. 3. Trochees; these are marked on the basis of word or thought accent, excepting the possibilities under Schmidt's rule,¹ and counting as regular iambic feet all those that are made up of two almost equally light accents, like *stance of* in "This is the instance of my scorn'd disgrace," though there may be a shade more of emphasis on *stance* than on *of*. 4. Anapæstic feet; these are admitted to exist only where the rules for elision can not be applied, as in "And wakes the dull eye e'en of a Pūritān." 5. Accent on light syllables, such as unemphatic conjunctions, prepositions, and the definite and indefinite articles. 6. Double endings. 7. Regular verses,—admitting light accents, and a trochaic foot at the beginning of the verse or after the cæsural pause. 8. Regular verses,—admitting light accents, and a double ending of not more than one syllable. 9. Incomplete verses. 10. Regular verses,—admitting light accents only. 11. Regular verses,—admitting light accents, trochees in the first foot or just after the cæsural pause, and double endings of not more than one syllable.

In applying these rules, there were found some cases that could easily have been decided either of two ways. But as most of them did not involve important differences, and as they will about balance one another, they need not be especially considered. There are some other cases, however, that this classification could not cover. They are the almost hopeless

¹ "Dissyllabicoxytonical adjectives and participles become paroxytonical before nouns accented on the first syllable."—*Lexicon*, p. 1413.

prose lines that occur now and then in both Massinger and Rowley. For instance, no statistics of irregularities of verse will indicate the rythmical value of such lines as Rowley's

"Virtue and valour, (those fair twins"

or

"In which he casts his actions. Such a discreet temperance;"

or of Massinger's

"To all you meet; I am this day the state-drunkard."

It can be noted merely that they occur with about equal frequency in both Massinger and Rowley.

Before comparing the figures arrived at, a few facts about the plays should be recalled: *BMC* was printed in 1602, probably not more than four or five years after Middleton began writing. It is, therefore, pretty certain to be his work, not much if any changed by another hand. *MI* and *P* were printed in 1607, and the title pages say they were played by the Children of Paul's. They are, therefore, open to more suspicion, but were probably not revised by anyone, since they would not be likely to have two runs at the theatre before that date. *A Game at Chess* was played only nine days in August of 1624, and was then stopped by order of the Court. Middleton was prosecuted as the sole author, and the play was printed in 1625. This too, then, is not likely to have been retouched and shows us clearly Middleton's later style. Rowley's *WNV* was printed in 1632; *MatM*, in 1633; and *ALL*, also in 1633. The first two of these have been suspected, and the last is not above suspicion; but they were printed while Rowley was probably yet alive, and have the balance of probability in their favor. *DofM* was printed in 1623, and *NWD* in 1633. They are both typical of Massinger's style, although the latter has been slightly suspected of Fletcher's influence. It is safe to say, then, that these eight plays will give an approximate idea of Middleton's (early), of Rowley's, and of Massinger's verse style.

TABULAR VIEW OF VERSE ANALYSIS.

	Elision.	Resolution.	Trochees.	Anapæsts.	Light Accents.	Double Endings.	Reg. plus Trochees.	Reg. plus Double Endings.	Incomplete Verses.	Reg. plus Light Accents.	Reg. plus Light Ac. plus Trochees plus Doub. End.
Middleton:—											
<i>BMC</i>	7	1	34	4	30	7	22	4	1	60	86
<i>MT</i>	8	5	19	12	12	14	11	10	11	43	64
<i>P</i>	8	6	32	12	17	22	15	14	8	44	69
<i>GatC</i>	17	...	22	12	35	49	15	31	2	29	67
Rowley:—											
<i>MatM</i>	13	8	31	29	33	42	6	18	12	22	44
<i>WNV</i>	14	13	37	22	23	25	9	11	12	32	49
<i>ALL</i>	17	4	44	28	21	30	16	11	3	33	57
Massinger:—											
<i>DofM</i>	16	...	22	6	40	53	12	40	...	34	79
<i>NWD</i>	15	...	18	16	34	55	12	39	1	25	73

In this table there are some rather remarkable differences. First, in the matter of exceptional verse structure: Three of Middleton's plays require the reader to resort to the resolution of a syllable, and contain 12 instances in all. None of Massinger's plays require resolution. On the other hand, Rowley's plays have 25 instances of resolution. The percentages of resolved feet are: Massinger, 0 per cent.;¹ Middleton, 3 per cent.; Rowley, 8 per cent.² The anapæst also is unusual in blank verse. Of anapæstic feet, Middleton uses 4, 12, 12, and 12, respectively in his plays; Massinger, 6, and 16; Rowley, 29, 22, and 28. If we average these, and consider only Middleton's early work, the percentages are: Middleton,

¹ Strictly speaking, here, as elsewhere, this numeral is not a percentage but indicates the average number of instances in a hundred lines.

² In most cases fractions are disregarded.

9 per cent.; Massinger, 11 per cent.; and Rowley, 26 per cent. The use of incomplete verses is more frequent in Rowley than in Middleton, and much more frequent in these two men than in Massinger. The percentages are: Rowley, 9 per cent.; Middleton, $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; Massinger, $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Although light accents are frequently resorted to by all poets, they are an irregularity that weakens the verse. In the use of these, Massinger is more frequent than Rowley, and Rowley than Middleton. The percentages are: Massinger, 37 per cent.; Rowley, 26 per cent.; and Middleton, 23 per cent. Finally the use of trochaic feet out of the usual positions, that is, other than at the beginning of a verse or after the cæsure,¹ is more marked in Rowley than in Massinger or in Middleton. Massinger uses 40 trochees in 200 lines. Of these, 4 are improperly used, making 2 per cent. out of the usual places. Middleton uses 107 trochees in 400 lines. Of these, 10 are improperly used, making an average of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. out of the usual places. Rowley uses 112 trochees in 300 lines. Of these, 35 are improperly used, making an average of 12 per cent. out of the usual places. It should also be noticed that Rowley uses a larger number of trochees than either Massinger or Middleton. The percentages of trochees used, are: Rowley, 37 per cent.; Middleton, 26 per cent.; and Massinger, 20 per cent.

Second, in the matter of regularity: Since double endings do not interrupt the rhythm, but only change it, and since they were a regularly admitted form of blank verse, I class them here. This table shows that although Middleton used a good many double endings in his later verse, he used less in his early verse than did Rowley, and Rowley used less than Massinger. The percentages are: Middleton (early), 14 per cent.; Rowley, 32 per cent.; and Massinger, 54 per cent.

¹In order that I may have a standard by which to determine varying usage, I have assumed that a trochaic foot at the beginning of an iambic verse or after the cæsure is usual, without desiring to raise the question of verse forms.

Even counting in the late play, Middleton's average is only 23 per cent. If, however, we compare the number of double endings of more than one extra syllable, we get a somewhat different result. Rowley uses 7 per cent., Middleton 3 per cent., and Massinger $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; this shows that Rowley is by far the most careless in their use. In the matter of perfectly regular blank verse, Middleton seems to have fallen off from his early period to his later. If trochees or double endings are not admitted, the regular verses in the nine plays respectively are as follows: Middleton, 60, 43, 44, and 29; Rowley, 22, 32, and 33; Massinger, 34 and 25. Thus Massinger and Rowley average the same, 29 per cent., but are both much below Middleton, whose average is 44 per cent. If, however, trochaic feet in the usual positions and double endings be admitted, the relative positions change somewhat, Massinger surpassing Middleton in regularity. Then the regular verses in the nine plays respectively are as follows: Middleton, 86, 64, 69, and 67; Rowley, 44, 49, and 57; Massinger, 79 and 73. Or averaging these, the percentages become: Massinger 76 per cent., Middleton 71 per cent. (early, 73 per cent.), Rowley 50 per cent. The influence of double endings on Massinger's verse will be clearly seen if we compare these percentages just obtained with the percentages of regular verses plus light accents and trochees in the usual positions. Of these verses, the percentages are: Middleton 60 per cent. (early, 65 per cent.), Massinger 42 per cent., and Rowley 39 per cent.

In brief, then, Massinger's verse is a little more regular than Middleton's, and Middleton's a good deal more regular than Rowley's, if we allow both trochees and double endings. But if we allow only trochees in the usual places and light accents, Middleton is much more regular than Massinger, who drops down nearer to Rowley. A large number of double endings indicates Massinger's work rather than Rowley's, and Rowley's rather than Middleton's early work; but the use of more than one extra syllable indicates Rowley rather than

Middleton, and Middleton than Massinger. The use of resolved syllables, of anapæsts, and of trochees out of the usual places, indicates Rowley rather than either Middleton or Massinger. The use of incomplete verses indicates Rowley or Middleton rather than Massinger; and the use of light accents indicates Massinger or Rowley rather than Middleton.

In all this consideration, it is of course admitted that figures do not determine poetry; but a careful reading will show that the passages used are typical, and that the general impression is like the conclusions arrived at in these tables. It will therefore be safe to apply these verse tests in connection with the other characteristics already ascertained in determining the parts of *The Old Law* written by Middleton, by Rowley, and by Massinger.

V.

The title page of the oldest known quarto of *The Old Law* reads as follows: "The Excellent Comedy, called The Old Law, or A new way to please you.

by { Phil. Massinger.
 Tho. Middleton.
 William Rowley.

Acted before the King and Queene at Salisbury House, and at severall other places, with great Applause. Together with an exact and perfect Catalogue of all the Plays, with the Authors Names, and what are Comedies, Tragedies, Histories, Pastoralls, Masks, Interludes, more exactly Printed than ever before. London, Printed for Edward Archer, at the signe of the Adam and Eve, in Little Britaine. 1656."

The significance of these statements must not be overestimated. The fact that this play is attributed to Massinger, Middleton, and Rowley, merely establishes a presumption that each man had some part in its composition. That Massinger had the greater share since his name comes first, does not follow. He may have been the last reviser, or the most

popular, or the most influential, or the printer may have arranged the names alphabetically. Moreover, excepting the fact that the play was "Acted before the King and Queene at Salisbury House," the title page gives us no information on three important questions, namely: the part each man had in the composition of the play; the manner of its composition; and the date of its composition. Since the answer to the first of these questions will materially aid in answering the other two, attention will first be given to the probable part each man had in the composition of *The Old Law*.

The following distribution of passages may seem dogmatic because incapable of exact proof. It certainly is a delicate matter to assert that the work of one man ends at a given line, and that the work of another follows, with no other evidence than the general dramatic characteristics of the two men to support the assertion. On the other hand, the difference between certain lines and certain others is indisputable. Somewhere between them the work of one of the men must end and that of the other begin. The assignment of passages that follows pretends only to indicate this probable point of division. For the sake of definiteness of statement, however, I have found it necessary to mark the places of division precisely, although I realize that the evidence supports only my general conclusions as to the distribution of parts in the play. As a still further recognition of the difficulty of too close distinctions in style and method, I have recognized two classes of passages: one, in which for several consecutive lines there is clear evidence of only one hand; the other, in which the work of one man is so closely interwoven with the work of another that any attempt to separate the lines would be impracticable if not impossible.

The first act of *The Old Law* shows the work of Middleton and Rowley divided as follows: Middleton, lines 106-110, 126-159, 260-274, 312-349, and 395-442; Rowley, lines 1-105, 111-125, 160-259, and 350-394; Middleton and Rowley, lines 275-311 and 442-488.

In these mixed passages Rowley's hand is felt in the more rapid dialogue, in the rough, prosaic lines, and especially in the rougher lines between more rhythmical ones where they could be omitted without affecting the sense. Lines 275-280 show such an interpolation :

- Sim.* The day goes away, sir.
Creon. Why, wouldst thou have me gone, Simonides?
Sim. O my heart! Would you have me gone before you, sir,
 You give me such a deadly wound?
Clean. Fine rascal! [Aside.
Sim. Blemish my duty so with such a question?
 Sir, I would haste me to the duke for mercy: etc.

The second speech of Simonides and the aside of Cleanthes are not in the same style as the lines before and after, and give no added information. Omitted, they leave a passage quite in Middleton's style; as they stand, the passage does not feel homogeneous. In lines 293-297 there is a similar passage. Besides the difference of style and taste, there is a curious confusion of pronouns in the quarto reading that might well have arisen from an interpolation. The quarto reads,

Sir, we have canvassed it from top to toe,
 Turn'd it upside down; threw her on her side,
 Nay, open'd and dissected all her entrails,
 Yet can find none; there's nothing to be hop'd
 But the duke's mercy.

Although the antecedent of the pronoun is somewhat remote, it is plainly *law*. If the writer of these lines had had a consistent figure in his mind when he wrote, he could hardly have referred to *law* with *it* in two cases and with *her* in the following three, all in three lines. Nor would a printer be any more likely to make such an error. If, now, the line and a half containing the feminine pronouns and the coarse Rowleyesque figure be removed, the improved verse and the finer taste are like Middleton's. Restored, it reads,

Sir, we have canvass'd it from top to toe,
 Turn'd it upside down ; yet can find none :
 There's nothing to be hoped but the duke's mercy.

Such retouching as Rowley probably did in these two passages, notwithstanding their rougher verse and coarser taste, gives more vigor to the lines, and is what we should expect from a comedy actor who was attempting to liven up an old play. Because of similar combinations of the verse of both men, lines 442-488 are also put into this group of mixed verses.

Of the lines assigned to Middleton, lines 106-110 are a unique case. Excepting the law itself, they are the only prose in this act. This fact alone would not assign them to Middleton, though it would be good evidence ; but the additional fact that this speech is a non-sequitur, makes it very suspicious. The apparent reason for its presence is that it brings us back to the main question from which the preceding speeches have taken us. Notice that there is nothing in the preceding speeches to account for the *why* and *you* of this speech, as there must have been when the speech was first written. Lines 90-110 will show the lack of sequence :

Clean. They shall be now, sir,
 And shall have large fees if they'll undertake
 To help a good cause, for it wants assistance ;
 Bad ones, I know, they can insist upon.

First Law. O sir, we must undertake of both parts ;
 But the good we have most good in.

Clean. Pray you, say,
 How do you allow of this strange edict ?

First Law. *Secundum justitiam* ; by my faith, sir,
 The happiest edict that ever was in Epire.

Clean. What, to kill innocents, sir ? It cannot be,
 It is no rule in justice there to punish.

First Law. O sir,
 You understand a conscience, but not law.

Clean. Why, sir, is there so main a difference ?

First Law. You'll never be good lawyer if you understand not that.

Clean. I think, then, 'tis the best to be a bad one.

First Law. Why, sir, the very letter and the sense both do overthrow you in this statute, which speaks, that every man living to four score years, and women to three score, shall then be cut off, as fruitless to the republic, and law shall finish what nature linger'd at.

This last speech implies that they have been discussing the possibility of finding a defect in the law so that its execution can be avoided ; but the preceding nine speeches touch on no such topic. They concern the relation of lawyers to good and bad cases, the justice of this law, and the difference between conscience and law. Plainly Rowley has here cut out some of Middleton's work and inserted some of his own, without taking pains to make it fit perfectly. The next Middleton passage, lines 126-159, is so assigned merely because the law must have been a part of the old play, and there is no evidence later that the general form of the play has been changed. The last three Middleton passages are so assigned because of their uniformly better rhythm, the absence of double endings, and the longer, more formal, more serious speeches. The difference in style and verse is easily seen in four consecutive speeches, lines 383-404 :

- Leon.* I'll tell thee one ;
 She counsels me to fly my severe country ;
 Turn all into treasure, and there build up
 My decaying fortunes in a safer soil,
 Where Epire's law cannot claim me.
- Clean.* And, sir,
 I apprehend it as a safest course,
 And may be easily accomplished ;
 Let us be all most expeditious.
 Every country where we breathe will be our own,
 Or better soil ; heaven is the roof of all ;
- 393 And now, as Epire's statute by this law,
 There is 'twixt us and heaven a dark eclipse.
- Hip.* O then avoid it, sir ; these sad events
 Follow those black predictions.
- Leon.* I prithee, peace ;
 I do allow thy love, Hippolita,
 But must not follow it as counsel, child ;

I must not shame my country for the law.
 This country here hath bred me, brought me up,
 And shall I now refuse a grave in her?
 I'm in my second infancy, and children
 Ne'er sleep so sweetly in their nurse's cradle
 As in their mother's.

Query: does the break in construction in lines 393-394 show that Rowley tried to patch his lines to Middleton's at that place? The break in quality of verse is near there, plainly enough.

All the other passages in this act assigned to Rowley can be classed with lines 90-105 and 383-394 previously quoted, since they have the same marks of style and verse. They contain short, abrupt speeches that sacrifice rhythm to dramatic effect. The verse halts every now and then for a misplaced trochee, or for an anapæst, or for a resolved syllable. That this rough verse belongs to Rowley and not to Massinger, can be seen by comparing lines 160-175, for instance, with a passage in *WNV*, act III, (page 151) which shows the same tricks of Rowley's style. *The Old Law*, I, 1, 160-175:

Clean. A fine edict, and very fairly gilded!
 And is there no scruple in all these words
 To demur the law upon occasion?
Sim. Pox! 'tis an unnecessary inquisition;
 Prithee, set him not about it.
Sec'd Law. Troth, none, sir;
 It is so evident and plain a case,
 There is no succour for the defendant.
Clean. Possible! can nothing help in a good case?
First Law. Faith, sir, I do think that there may be a hole,
 Which would protract—delay, if not remedy.
Clean. Why, there's some comfort in that: good sir, speak it.
First Law. Nay, you must pardon me for that, sir.
Sim. Prithee, do not;
 It may ope a wound to many sons and heirs,
 That may die after it.

A Woman Never Vexed, act III:

Steph. O nephew, are you come! the welcom'st wish
 That my heart has; this is my kinsman, sweet.

- Wife.* Let him be largely texted in your love,
That all the city may read it fairly;
You cannot remember me, and him forget;
We were alike to you in poverty.
- Steph.* I should have begged that bounty of your love,
Though you had scanted me to have given't him;
For we are one; I an uncle-nephew,
He a nephew-uncle. But, my sweet self,
My slow request you have anticipated
With proffered kindness; and I thank you for it.
But how, kind cousin, does your father use you?
Is your name found again within his books?
Can he read son there?
- Rob.* 'Tis now blotted quite:
For the violent instigation
Of my cruel stepmother, his vows and oaths
Are stamped against me, ne'er to acknowledge me,
Never to call or bless me as his child;
But in his brow, his bounty and behaviour
I read it all most plainly.

A comparison of these passages with a passage from Massinger's *DofM*, act IV, scene 3 (page 74), will make apparent the reason for assigning the first to Rowley:

- Sforza.* There's comfort yet: I'll ply her
Each hour with more ambassadors of more honours,
Titles, and eminence; my second self,
Francisco, shall solicit her.
- Steph.* That a wise man,
And what is more, a prince that may command,
Should sue thus poorly, and treat with his wife,
As she were a victorious enemy,
At whose proud feet himself, his state, and country,
Basely begged mercy!
- Sforza.* What is that you mutter?
I'll have thy thoughts.
- Steph.* You shall. You are too fond,
And feed a pride that's swollen too big already,
And surfeits with observance.

The verse of the two former passages is alike, and is rougher than that of the latter. Still further, there is nothing in the former passages like the first speech by Stephen for compli-

cated sentence structure. Finally, as still further corroboration of Rowley's hand in the act, there are a few touches of pathos, like the last line in lines 299-303 :

Then to his hopeless mercy last I go ;
 I have so many precedents before me,
 I must call it hopeless : Antigona,
 See me deliver'd up unto my deathsman,
 And then we'll part ;—five years hence I'll look for thee.

Unlike the first act, the first scene of the second act shows Rowley's revision affecting nearly all of the scene. The passages are assigned : Rowley, lines 1-78, 100-171 ; Middleton, lines 78-99, 172-211 ; Rowley and Middleton, lines 211-272. Thus there remain only about sixty lines and a few scattered speeches that are unmistakably by Middleton. The difference between the two kinds of writing in this scene is well shown by lines 72-85 :

Sim. Push ! I'm not for you yet,
 Your company's too costly ; after the old man's
 Dispatch'd, I shall have time to talk with you ;
 I shall come into the fashion, ye shall see too,
 After a day or two ; in the mean time,
 I am not for your company.

Evan. Old Creon, you have been expected long ;
 Sure you're above four score.

Sim. Upon my life,
 Not four-and-twenty hours, my lord ; I search'd
 The church-book yesterday. Does your grace think
 I'd let my father wrong the law, my lord ?
 'Twere pity a' my life then ! no, your act
 Shall not receive a minute's wrong by him,
 While I live, sir ; and he's so just himself too,
 I know he would not offer't :—here he stands.

These two speeches by the same character could hardly have been written by the same person at the same time. The former speech can be read as verse only with the greatest care ; the latter has a distinct rhythm. In the former, the word and thought accents do not correspond to the verse accents ; in the latter, they all agree.

It is hardly worth while, even if it were possible, to try to separate Rowley's work from Middleton's in lines 211-272. That the basis of this passage was by Middleton can hardly be doubted since the general thought is necessary to the latter part of the play. The fact also that the quarto prints four passages, lines 211-213, 217-220, 224-227, and 260-263, as prose seems to show a confusion in the manuscript, which would be more likely to occur in case of revision than in case of rewriting. A good instance of what seems to be by Middleton, because of the self-restraint and the excellence of the puns, is found in lines 229-241 :

Sim. There's least need of thee, fellow ; I shall ne'er drink at home, I shall be so drunk abroad.

But. But a cup of small beer will do well next morning, sir.

Sim. I grant you ; but what need I keep so big a knave for a cup of small beer ?

Cook. Butler, you have your answer. Marry, sir, a cook I know your mastership cannot be without.

Sim. The more ass art thou to think so ; for what should I do with a mountebank, no drink in my house ?—the banishing the butler might have been a warning to thee, unless thou meanest to choke me.

Cook. In the meantime you have choked me, methinks.

This is too apt and calm for Rowley. On the other hand, his coarse jest and noise seem apparent in lines 256-264 :

Sim. And when my bets are all come in, and store,
Then, coachman, you can hurry me to my whore.

Coach. I'll firk 'em into foam else.

Sim. Speaks brave matter :
And I'll firk some too, or't shall cost hot water.

[*Exeunt Simonides, Coachman, and Footman.*]

Cook. Why, here's an age to make a cook a ruffian,
And scald the devil indeed ! do strange mad things,
Make mutton-pasties of dog's flesh,
Bake snakes for lamprey-pies, and cats for conies.

The passages assigned entirely to Rowley, lines 1-78 and 100-171, are of the same general character as are those assigned to him in the first act. They are well represented by lines

72-78 quoted above, and by lines 100-110, which show a slightly different vein :

Ant. His very household laws prescribed at home by him
Are able to conform seven Christian kingdoms,
They are so wise and virtuous.

Sim. Mother, I say—

Ant. I know your laws extend not to desert, sir,
But to unnecessary years; and, my lord,
His are not such; though they show white, they're worthy,
Judicious, able, and religious.

Sim. I'll help you to a courtier of nineteen, mother.

Ant. Away, unnatural!

Sim. Then I'm no fool, I'm sure,
For to be natural at such a time
Were a fool's part indeed.

These are too rapid, irregular, and vulgar for Massinger or Middleton.

In the second scene of the second act, Rowley continues the same process of revision. To him belong lines 1-74 and 121-137; to Middleton, lines 75-111; to Rowley and Middleton, lines 111-121 and 137-204.

The two Rowley passages, besides bearing the stamp of his rough verse, coarse humor, and rapid dialogue, are suspicious because they introduce a superfluous character, and show Eugenia in a meaningless double attitude. In line 10, she plainly refers to herself as being nineteen, and the rest of the play supports this statement, except that in these lines and in lines 121-137 she apparently has a daughter old enough to "make spoon meat" for her father and to "warm three night-caps for him." It may be explained that this girl is a daughter of the former wife. If so, it is curious that she is not utilized anywhere else to defend her father, and to arouse our sympathies with the losing side. Why is she not brought into the second scene of the third act, where her presence would make still more pitiful the foolish trials of Lysander? or why not in act five to plead for her father's life? Instead she appears only in these two passages, and serves merely as an

excuse for Eugenia to make two speeches, in themselves thoroughly Rowleyesque in coarseness, and quite inconsistent with other speeches in the same act. Compare :

Would not this vex a beauty of nineteen now?
 Alas ! I should be tumbling in cold baths now,
 Under each armpit a fine bean-flower bag,
 To screw out whiteness when I list—
 And some seven of the properest men i' the dukedom
 Making a banquet ready i' the next room for me;
 Where he that gets the first kiss is envied,
 And stands upon his guard a fortnight after.
 This is a life for nineteen ! 'tis but justice :
 For old men, whose great acts stand in their minds,
 And nothing in their bodies, do ne'er think
 A woman young enough for their desire ;
 And we young wenches, that have mother-wits,
 And love to marry muck first, and man after,
 Do never think old men are old enough,
 That we may soon be rid on 'em ; there's our quittance.
 I've waited for the happy hour this two year,
 And, if death be so unkind to let him live still,
 All that time I have lost.

II. 10-28.

with,

Excuse me, gentlemen ; 'twere as much impudence
 In me to give you a kind answer yet,
 As madness to produce a churlish one.
 I could say now, come a month hence, sweet gentlemen,
 Or two, or three, or when you will, indeed ;
 But I say no such thing : I set no time,
 Nor is it mannerly to deny any.
 I'll carry an even hand to all the world :
 Let other women make what haste they will,
 What's that to me ? but I profess unfeignedly,
 I'll have my husband dead before I marry ;
 Ne'er look for other answer at my hands, gentlemen.

II. 99-110.

and with;

Gentlemen,
 You know my mind ; I bar you not my house ;
 But if you choose out hours more seasonably,
 You may have entertainment.

II. 116-119.

This last is rather tame after the dashing effect of the first speech, and there is no apparent reason for the change.

Moreover, directly after this last mild speech, the daughter re-enters and gives occasion for other coarse comparisons between young and old husbands. It is probable, therefore, that these speeches are interpolated by Rowley.

Lines 75-111 are given to Middleton on the usual evidence of rhythm, which is corroborated by a phrase that would hardly have occurred to Rowley. Lines 85-93 utter a curse upon the young men who are courting Eugenia before Lysander is dead; they are followed by an apology for the rant into which the speaker has fallen:

I am too uncharitable,
Too foul; I must go cleanse myself with prayers.

Rowley would have left the curse ringing in our ears, and then have allowed Lysander to repent in private if the plot needed it, as it does not here. This touch is thoroughly like Middleton, showing his finer taste.

The mixed passages are assigned on the same grounds as the former ones. Detailed division would be as difficult as it would be needless.

In the first scene of the third act, there is found the unmistakably keen wit and the shrewd, unmoral, but genuine humor of Middleton. Massinger could not give to his humor the quick, natural turn here found, nor did he know such people as Gnotho, the Clerk, and the house servants of Simonides. Had Rowley written this or even revised it, there would have been some rough verses interspersed, and more thin punning and vulgarity. Only Middleton could write those shrewd suggestions by which Gnotho leads up to the change of the date in the parish register; he alone was capable of the perfect ethical abandon of the humor in lines 321-341:

Gno. You have but a month to live by the law.

Aga. Out, alas!

Gno. Nay, scarce so much.

Aga. O, O, O, my heart!

[Swoons.]

Gno. Ay, so! if thou wouldst go away quietly, 'twere sweetly done, and like
a kind wife; lie but a little longer, and the bell shall toll for thee.

Aga. O my heart, but a month to live!

Gno. Alas, why wouldst thou come back again for a month?—

I'll throw her down again—O, woman, 'tis not three weeks; I think a fortnight is the most.

Aga. Nay, then I am gone already! [Swoons.

Gno. I would make haste to the sexton now, but I'm afraid the tolling of the bell will wake her again. If she be so wise as to go now—she stirs again; there's two lives of the nine gone.

Aga. O, wouldst thou not help to recover me, husband?

Gno. Alas, I could not find it in my heart to hold thee by the nose, or box thy cheeks; it goes against my conscience.

Despicable as Gnotho really is from a purely moral viewpoint, his humor is irresistible. Like that of Tangle and of Falso in *P*, it is almost Shakespearean.

The second scene of the third act is in a very confusing condition. One long passage and two shorter ones are pretty clearly by Rowley, lines 56–196, 258–268, and 309–318. One passage, lines 1–55, shows the characteristics of Rowley and Middleton both. Two other passages, lines 197–257 and 269–308, show characteristics of Massinger and Middleton.

The Rowley passages, lines 56–196, 258–268, and 309–318, are distinctly marked with his rough verse, rapid conversation, coarse jests, and noisy humor. These qualities are especially noticeable in lines 138–196, where Lysander bests the three young courtiers in dancing, fencing, and drinking. Lines 56–138 are practically in the same spirit, and in fact are mostly a preparation for the contests, so there is little doubt that Rowley wrote all these lines. The other two shorter passages are not only quite unlike Middleton or Massinger, but they could easily be omitted. Their only value lies in their coarse humor. For instance, lines 256–268 read:

[Exit Lysander.

Clean. I see't has done him good; blessing go with it,
Such as may make him pure again.

Re-enter Eugenia.

Eugen. 'Twas bravely touch'd, i' faith, sir.

Clean. O, you're welcome.

Eugen. Exceedingly well handled.

Clean. 'Tis to you I come; he fell but i' my way.

Eugen. You mark'd his beard, cousin?

Clean. Mark me.

Eugen. Did you ever see a hair so changed?

Clean. I must be forc'd to wake her loudly too,
The devil has rock'd her so fast asleep.—
Strumpet!

Eugen. Do you call, sir?

Clean. Whore!

Eugen. How do you, sir?

Clean. Be I never so well,
I must be sick of thee; thou 'rt a disease
That stick'st to th' heart,—as all such women are.

By omitting all from "Re-enter Eugenia" to her last speech, we leave the sense and verse complete, and have thrown out some bad verse and coarseness. Considering the fact, also, that Eugenia is away during all of Cleanthes's lecture to Lysander except the first six lines, we obviate the necessity of explaining Eugenia's words, "Excellently well handled." How did she know? She was off the stage.

The passage given to Rowley and Middleton together, lines 1-55, is so assigned because, although it contains some instances of Rowley's rough verse and fun, it also shows in places a refinement of humor quite away from Rowley's bent, if not out of his power. The first hundred lines or so are probably as planned by Middleton, and remind us at once of Maria's and Sir Toby's trick on Malvolio, in *Twelfth Night*. The situations are surprisingly similar: the people that are the cause of the action stand one side and laugh at Lysander's foolish antics, then later join the scene themselves. The difference is that the introduction is more expanded in *The Old Law*, the people that caused the action did not plan it, and the antics of Lysander are much coarser than those of Malvolio. It is difficult to pick out Middleton's lines here, unless 37-43 are his:

I'm sure his head and beard, as he has order'd it,
Look not past fifty now: he'll bring 't to forty
Within these four days, for nine times an hour at least

He takes a black-lead comb, and kembs it over :
 Three-quarters of his beard is under fifty ;
 There's but a little tuft of fourscore left,
 All of one side, which will be black by Monday.

This has a better quality of verse and of humor than the rest, and is too much restrained in mirth for Rowley ; but the double endings are suspicious. Probably, therefore, the whole passage has been so thoroughly revised by Rowley that Middleton's influence in the first part of the scene is felt in the general trend of it rather than in passages of any length.

The most difficult parts of this scene to account for are lines 197-257 and 269-308. The difficulties in assigning these are numerous. In regularity of verse, in length and didactic quality of the speeches, they might be by either Middleton or Massinger, but not by Rowley. In frequency of double endings, 32 in 60 lines in the first passage and 18 in 40 lines in the next passage, they suggest Massinger rather than Rowley or Middleton. In directness of statement, that is in the absence of complicated sentences and periphrastic phrases, they suggest Middleton rather than Massinger. The natural conclusion is, therefore, that the originally simple sentence structure of Middleton has been retained by Massinger in his revision, which nevertheless has changed the form of many lines. Just how great that change was in all cases it is impossible to state ; but in lines 269-292 it seems easiest to separate the work of the two men. Of these, lines 275-282 contain practically all the double endings, they needlessly detail what is told in general either before or after, and can be omitted without affecting the rest of the passage, by reading "How he" in place of "So he" in line 283. I quote lines 270-288, enclosing the Massinger lines in marks of parenthesis, to show the difference :

What a dead modesty is i' this woman,
 Will never blush again ! Look on thy work
 But with a Christian eye, 'twould turn thy heart
 Into a shower of blood, to be the cause

Of that old man's destruction ; think upon 't,
 (Ruin eternally ; for, through thy loose follies,
 Heaven has found him a faint servant lately !
 His goodness has gone backward, and engender'd
 With his old sins again ; has lost his prayers,
 And all the tears that were companions with 'em :
 And like a blindfold man, giddy and blinded,
 Thinking he goes right on still, swerves but one foot,
 And turns to the same place where he set out ;
 So) How he, that took his farewell of the world,
 And cast the joys behind him, out of sight,
 Summ'd up his hours, made even with time and men,
 Is now in heart arriv'd at youth again,
 All by thy wildness : thy too hasty lust
 Has driven him to this strong apostacy.

Otherwise, the only certain feeling is that both Middleton and Massinger were concerned in these speeches.

The first scene of the fourth act is easy to assign. Like all the humor of low characters, it is quite out of Massinger's power, and possible only to Middleton and Rowley. In lines 1-45 the naturalness and self-control and good-natured satire are almost certainly Middleton's. From about line 45 to line 90 there linger a few of Middleton's touches, as in lines 55-62 :

Gno. No dancing with me, we have Siren here.

Cook. Siren ! 'twas Hiren, the fair Greek, man.

Gno. Five drachmas of that. I say Siren, the fair Greek, and so are all fair Greeks.

Cook. A match ! five drachmas her name was Hiren.

Gno. Siren's name was Siren, for five drachmas.

The nice point in Gnotho's last speech is quite in Middleton's finer vein. The excessive punning, however, that follows, like that in lines 66-75, is much more like Rowley :

Cook. That Nell was Helen of Greece too.

Gno. As long as she tarried with her husband, she was Ellen ; but after she came to Troy, she was Nell of Troy, or Bonny Nell, whether you will or no.

Tail. Why, did she grow shorter when she came to Troy ?

Gno. She grew longer, if you mark the story. When she grew to be an ell, she was deeper than any yard of Troy could reach, by a quarter; there was Cressid was Troy weight, and Nell was avoirdupois; she held more, by four ounces, than Cressida.

"This miserable trash, which is quite silly enough to be original," is thoroughly in the vein of Rowley; but I cannot agree with Gifford when he continues, it "has the merit of being copied from Shakespeare." There are two very different qualities of humor here within a few lines of each other. This latter passage is the same kind of humor as that in *ALL*, quoted on page 21. From line 90 to the end of the scene Middleton practically disappears, leaving only the burlesque, the coarse jest, and the vulgar allusion of Rowley. It is possible that a few exceptions should be made, as in lines 113, 129, and 157:

Gnotho to Agatha. I'll not leave her [the courtesan]: art not ashamed to be seen in a tavern, and hast scarce a fortnight to live?

Darest thou call my wife [the courtesan whom Gnotho plans to marry as soon as Agatha is dead], a strumpet, thou preter-pluperfect tense of a woman!

Go, go thy ways, thou old almanac at the twenty-eighth day of December, e'en almost out of date!

These all have the shrewd satirical wit of Middleton, that goes clear up to the vulgar line but does not pass unless necessary. A few such phrases seem to have been retained by Rowley.

The second scene of the fourth act shows Massinger's characteristics of verse, construction, and phrasing almost throughout. The main exception is in the last thirty lines. These last lines, 254-284, are like several other humorous passages that could easily be omitted. The scene ends harmoniously at line 270, if we omit lines 254-266, which add nothing but some coarse jests on Simonides' cowardice. The lines following line 270 merely continue this theme with the addi-

tional fact that Simonides has cut his finger on his own sword. It is thus just about the sort of thing a comedian might add to a play he was trying to liven up.

The rest of the scene bears many traces of Massinger. First, the short speeches are almost invariably so arranged that there are no incomplete lines. For example, lines 56-65 (Bullen erroneously numbers them as nine lines):

Leon. What was 't disturbed my joy?
Clean. Did you not hear,
 As afar off?
Loon. What, my excellent comfort?
Clean. Nor you?
Hip. I heard a— [A horn.
Clean. Hark, again!
Leon. Bless my joy,
 What ails it on a sudden?
Clean. Now? since lately?
Leon. 'Tis nothing but a symptom of thy care, man.
Clean. Alas, you do not hear well!
Leon. What was 't, daughter?

Next, there is an unusual number of double endings. In the first speech of 24 lines there are 11; in the 100 lines from 101 to 200, for example, there are 51 double endings. These typical passages compared with earlier passages assigned to Middleton will show the difference. In act I, scene 1, lines 397-437, there are 13 double endings; in act II, scene 1, lines 78-98, there are 7 double endings; in lines 170-210 of the same scene, there are 11 double endings. Thus in 100 lines by Middleton there are only 31 double endings as compared with 51 in 100 lines here assigned to Massinger. This agrees with the statistics given earlier. Still further, there are three or four sentences with Massinger's peculiarly complicated sentence structure. For example, lines 5-14, and 104-113:

For in these woods lies hid all my life's treasure,
 Which is too much never to fear to lose,
 Though it be never lost: and if our watchfulness
 Ought to be wise and serious 'gainst a thief

That comes to steal our goods, things all without us,
 That proves vexation often more than comfort;
 How mighty ought our providence to be,
 To prevent those, if any such there were,
 That come to rob our bosom of our joys,
 That only makes poor man delight to live !

But finding it
 Grow to a noted imperfection in me,
 For anything too much is vicious,
 I come to these disconsolate walks, of purpose,
 Only to dull and take away the edge on't.
 I ever had a greater zeal to sadness,
 A natural propension, I confess, my lord,
 Before that cheerful accident fell out—
 If I may call a father's funeral cheerful,
 Without wrong done to duty or my love.

That there are not more of these complicated sentences may well happen since Massinger would naturally use the original verse as a basis, and would so be somewhat influenced by the simpler style, except when he left the original entirely, as he seems to have done in the first speech. Finally, these passages show Massinger's method of didactic harangue, and his lack of power to phrase at a crisis. For instance, the first 24 lines are a clumsy preparation for the entrance of Leonides; then when Leonides comes out, instead of greeting his son and the son's wife he talks about the sweet sound of woman's voice. Cleanthes replies to this with a set speech, lines 37-49:

I hope to see you often and return
 Loaden with blessings, still to pour on some;
 I find 'em all in my contented peace,
 And lose not one in thousands; they're disperst
 So gloriously, I know not which are brightest.
 I find 'em, as angels are found, by legions:
 First, in the love and honesty of a wife,
 Which is the first and chieftest of all temporal blessings;
 Next, in yourself, which is the hope and joy
 Of all my actions, my affairs, my wishes;
 And lastly, which crowns all, I find my soul
 Crown'd with the peace of 'em, th' eternal riches,
 Man's only portion for his heavenly marriage !

Nothing could be more like Massinger. This is the very thing a man might moralize out of the scene after it was over, but not at all what he would say while he was there. Again, at another crucial moment, when Leonides has been found by the duke's followers and brought out to be taken to execution, when Cleanthes must realize that he has himself been found guilty of treason, his passion labors out as follows, lines 170-179:

Father! O father! now I see thee full
 In thy affliction; thou'rt a man of sorrow,
 But reverently becom'st it, that's my comfort;
 Extremity was never better grac'd,
 Than with that look of thine; O, let me look still,
 For I shall lose it! all my joy and strength [Kneels.
 Is e'en eclipse'd together. I transgressed
 Your law, my lord, let me receive the sting on't;
 Be once just, sir, and let the offender die:
 He's innocent in all, and I am guilty.

There can be little doubt that most of this scene was phrased by Massinger.

The last act is the most confusing part of the play. All three men seem to have had a hand in it in one place or another. Excepting the passages assigned to Middleton, I feel less certain of the divisions here than of any others. They are assigned, however, as follows: Middleton, lines 39-78, 106-124, 148-262, and 417-531; Massinger, lines 1-38, 79-105, and 125-147; Rowley and Middleton, lines 263-416;¹ Middleton, Rowley and Massinger, lines 532-713.

The Middleton passages, lines 39-78, 106-124, 148-262, and 417-531, contain both serious and comic matter. The serious matter in the first three passages is in Middleton's smooth blank verse, with very few double endings or irregularities of any kind. The difference between Middleton's

¹ In considering the amount of work done by each, it must be kept in mind that Bullen has made a mistake in numbering the lines, so that between the line numbered 301 and that numbered 400 there are only eight lines.

verse and that of the reviser can be seen in such a passage as lines 100-111 :

- Sim.* Ay, and gave me
Those elbow-healths, the hangman take him for't!
They had almost fetched my heart out: the Dutch venny
I swallow'd pretty well; but the half-pike
Had almost pepper'd me; but had I took long-sword,
Being swollen, I had cast my lungs out.
A Flourish. Enter Evander, and Cratilus.
- First Court.* Peace, the duke!
- Evan.* Nay, back t' your seats; who's that?
- Sec'd Court.* May't please your highness, it is old Lysander.
- Evan.* And brought in by his wife! a worthy precedent
Of one that no way would offend the law,
And should not pass away without remark.
You have been look'd for long.
- Lysan.* But never fit
To die till now, my lord. My sins and I
Have been but newly parted; much ado etc.

The difference in style between the verses of Simonides and those that follow is unmistakable. It is equally easy to detect Middleton's humor between lines 148 and 262. It has a mildly satirical tone, and is pointed toward the law courts, one of Middleton's favorite themes, as in lines 157-159 :

- Evan.* All our majesty
And power we have to pardon or condemn
Is now conferr'd on them.
- Sim.* And these we'll use
Little to thine advantage.

In other words, the judgment of the court is made before the trial begins. And again in lines 195-202 is a bit of genuine Middleton humor :

- Sim.* Know then, Cleanthes, there is none can be
A good son and bad subject; for, if princes
Be call'd the people's fathers, then the subjects
Are all his sons, and he that flouts the prince
Doth disobey the father: there you're gone.
- First Court.* And not to be recover'd.

- Sim.* And again—
Sec'd Court. If he be gone once, call him not again.
Sim. I say again, this act of thine expresses
 A double disobedience.

That Middleton was solely responsible for the very comic scene from 432 to 531,—lines 417–432 are his, but are not comic,—is shown by the absence of Rowley's marked characteristics, and by the fact that Massinger could not do such work. The noisy good nature of Gnotho in his repeated "Crowd on, I say," must not be confused with the vulgar noise and horseplay of Rowley. Then, too, this passage contains the subtle, almost Shakespearean humor that was also found in Falso in *P*, and in Blurt and his assistants in *BMC*. Notice lines 444–453 :

- Leon.* Good sir, a few words, if you will vouchsafe 'em ;
 Or will you be forc'd ?
Gno. Forced ! I would the duke himself would say so.
Evan. I think he dares, sir, and does ; if you stay not,
 You shall be forced.
Gno. I think so, my lord, and good reason too ; shall not I stay, when
 your grace says I shall ? I were unworthy to be a bridegroom
 in any part of your highness's dominions, then : will it please
 you to taste of the wedlock-courtesy ?

Falstaff himself has hardly bowed to authority and slapped it on the shoulder at the same time with better wit. It is the good-natured, unethical, slightly satirical, shrewd mother wit found frequently in Middleton's early plays. There can be almost no doubt who wrote this.

The Massinger passages, lines 1–38, 79–105, and 125–147, have the usual characteristics,—the double endings, the regular verse even in broken lines, and the careful explanations ; still more, they lack the dignity and rhythm, and the humor of Middleton, and they lack the dash and noise of Rowley. Notice the clumsy humor of lines 88–105 :

- Eug.* Now, servants, may a lady be so bold
 To call your power so low ?

- Sim.* A mistress may ;
She can make all things low ; then in that language
There can be no offence.
- Eug.* The time's now come
Of manumissions ; take him into bonds,
And I am then at freedom.
- Sec'd Court.* Is't possible these gouty legs danc'd lately,
And shatter'd in a galliard ?
- Eug.* Jealousy
And fear of death can work strange prodigies.
- Sec'd Court.* The nimble fencer this, that made me tear
And traverse 'bout the chamber ?

These lines are too stiff and formal for Middleton, and too tame for Rowley to write at the climax of the play ; they can be by no one but Massinger, especially since they closely resemble his other work.

The only passage that retains Rowley's characteristics at all clearly is in lines 263-416, where it is in close proximity to portions of the law that would probably be by Middleton, and with some verses that are rather by Middleton than by Rowley. Compare lines 258-275 :

- Evan.* These are thy judges, and by their grave law
I find thee clear, but these delinquents guilty.
You must change places, for 'tis so decreed :
Such just pre-eminence hath thy goodness gain'd,
Thou art the judge now, they the men arraign'd. [*To Clean.*]
- First Court.* Here's fine dancing, gentlemen.
- Sec'd Court.* Is thy father amongst them ?
- Sim.* O a pox ! I saw him the first thing I look'd on.
Alive again ! 'sight, I believe now a father
Hath as many lives as a mother.
- Clean.* 'Tis full as blessed as 'tis wonderful.
O, bring me back to the same law again !
I am fouler than all these ; seize on me, officers,
And bring me to my sentence.
- Sim.* What's all this ?
- Clean.* A fault not to be pardon'd,
Unnaturalness is but sin's shadow to it.
- Sim.* I am glad of that ; I hope the case may alter,
And I turn judge again.
- Evan.* Name your offence.

It will be noticed that if all the rough and incomplete verses and coarse expressions, which destroy the dignity of this trial, are omitted, the remaining lines, which are thoroughly like Middleton's, will still make good sense and good verses. It looks, therefore, as though the speeches of the First and Second Courtiers, of Simonides, and the last one of Cleanthes, had been interpolated. For the same reasons, the comments upon the law in lines 289-409 do not seem like Middleton. Instead, he would be much more likely to read the whole law through, and then sentence the guilty. Although he himself is inclined to make sport of the law courts, he does not allow the guilty to do so in the presence of a serious judge. He would not allow such jests as occur in these two passages while the law is being administered by the duke. Compare *P*, act V, scene 1, lines 210-229 :

Jew. Wife. Who would not love a friend at court? what fine galleries and rooms am I brought through! I had thought my Knight durst not have shown his face here, I.

Pho. Now, mother of pride and daughter of lust, which is your friend now?

Jew. Wife. Ah me!

Pho. I'm sure you are not so unprovided to be without a friend here: you'll pay enough for him first.

Jew. Wife. This is the worst room that ever I came in.

Pho. I am your servant, mistress; know you not me?

Jew. Wife. Your worship is too great for me to know; I'm but a small-timbered woman, when I'm out of my apparel, and dare not venture upon greatness.

Pho. Do you deny me then? know you this purse?

Jew. Wife. That purse? O death, has the Knight serv'd me so?
Given away my favours?

Pho. Stand forth, thou one of those

For whose close lusts the plague ne'er leaves the city.
Thou worse than common! private, subtle harlot!

These scenes are quite similar in theme and characters, but the Jeweler's wife does not dare be familiar with the young prince, as are Eugenia and Simonides with Evander. The

trial scene in *The Old Law* lacks the dignity that Middleton puts into his serious presentations of courts of law.

The characteristics of all three men are so closely combined in lines 532-713, that the only safe thing to do is to point out a few places where these characteristics jostle one another closest. The lines seem to have been too much revised to allow of anything like probable assignment of more than brief passages. For instance, Gnotho for the most part keeps the satirical, dry humor originally given him by Middleton, as in lines 549-553 :

Ye are good old men, and talk as age will give you leave. I would speak with the youthful duke himself; he and I may speak of things that shall be thirty or forty years after you are dead and rotten. Alas! you are here to-day, and gone to sea to-morrow.

This is followed by some prosaic verse which is quite unlike Middleton and equally unlike that which Evander uses in other places; for example, compare lines 554-559 and 569-572, with 424-431 :

In troth, sir, then I must be plain with you.
The law that should take away your old wife from you,
The which I do perceive was your desire,
Is void and frustrate; so for the rest:
There has been since another parliament
Has cut it off.

Your old wives cannot die to-day by any
Law of mine; for aught I can say to 'em
They may, by a new edict, bury you,
And then, perhaps, you pay a new fine too.

Of sons and wives we see the worst and best.
May future ages yield Hippolitas
Many; but few like thee, Eugenia!
Let no Simonides henceforth have fame,
But all blest sons live in Cleanthes' name—
Ha! what strange kind of melody was that?
Yet give it entrance, whatso'er it be,
This day is all devote to liberty.

The last passage is entirely different in tone and verse from the other two; it is rhythmical and dignified, while the others have the roughness of Rowley with the clumsy humor of Massinger. Only a little farther on comes such a noisy, coarse, punning passage as lines 585-604. Omitting some of the worst, I will quote 591-594 to show their quality :

Avaunt, my venture! it can ne'er be restor'd,
Till Ag, my old wife, be thrown overboard:
Then come again, old Ag, since it must be so:
Let bride and venture with woful music go.

Another passage, in which Gnotho has been robbed of some of his boisterousness, is found in lines 613-627. It is very badly printed in the quarto, as though from a bad place in the manuscript, where the reviser had been at work,—I give Bullen's restoration :

All hopes dash'd; the clerk's duties lost,
[My] venture gone; my second wife divorc'd;
And which is worst, the old one come back again!
Such voyages are made now-a-days!
I will weep two salt [ones out] of my nose, besides these
two fountains of fresh water. Your grace had been more
kind to your young subjects—heaven bless and mend
your laws, that they do not gull your poor country-men
[in this] fashion: but I am not the first, by forty, that
has been undone by the law. 'Tis but a folly to stand
upon terms; I take my leave of your grace, as well as
mine eyes will give me leave: I would they had been
asleep in their beds when they opened 'em to see this day!
Come, Ag; come, Ag.

The four verses are like Rowley; the rest of the passage has a suggestion of both Rowley and Middleton, but is wordy enough to be the work of Massinger. It is probably Massinger's dilution of Rowley's boisterous Gnotho, with just a slight touch of Middleton's wit in a few places. A little further on we have Middleton's dignified closing of the play with a speech by Cleanthes; lines 675-686 :

Here's virtue's throne,
 Which I'll embellish with my dearest jewels
 Of love and faith, peace and affection!
 This is the altar of my sacrifice,
 Where daily my devoted knees shall bend.
 Age-honour'd shrine! time still so love you,
 That I so long may have you in mine eye
 Until my memory lose your beginning!
 For you, great prince, long may your fame survive,
 Your justice and your wisdom never die,
 Crown of your crown, the blessing of your land,
 Which you reach to her from your regent hand!

But after this comes a passage of twenty-six rather ragged verses, containing nine double endings, and closing with a moral tag, thoroughly after the manner of Massinger. Thus is woven together, in these last hundred lines, some of the rhythmical verse and keen wit of Middleton, some of the noise and coarse humor of Rowley, and some of the wordiness and didacticism of Massinger.

My analysis of the authorship of *The Old Law* may be summarized as follows:

Middleton, I, 1, 106-110, 126-159, 260-274, 312-349, 395-441;

II, 1, 78-99, 172-211;

II, 2, 75-121;

III, 1, 1-356;

IV, 1, 1-45;

V, 1, 39-78, 106-124, 148-262, 417-531:

Rowley, I, 1, 1-105, 111-125, 160-259, 350-394;

II, 1, 1-78, 100-171;

II, 2, 1-74, 121-137;

III, 2, 56-196, 258-268, 309-318;

IV, 1, 46-177;

IV, 2, 254-284:

Massinger, IV, 2, 1-253;

V, 1, 1-38, 79-105, 125-147:

Middleton-Rowley, I, 1, 275-311, 442-488 ;

II, 1, 211-272 ;

II, 2, 137-204 ;

III, 2, 1-55 ;

V, 1, 263-416 :

Middleton-Massinger, III, 2, 197-257, 269-308 :

Middleton-Rowley-Massinger, V, 1, 532-713.

VI.

If this distribution of passages is approximately correct, there can be but one conclusion as to the method of composition. Collaboration is out of the question, and revision by more than one of the men at a time is improbable. It must, therefore, be concluded that the play was written by one of the men, was later revised by another, and still later revised by the third.

A careful consideration of the passages assigned to Massinger will show that he was clearly a reviser ; he appears only in the third, fourth, and fifth acts. That Rowley also was a reviser, and that Middleton was the writer of the original play, are apparent from the following facts : Rowley has little to do with the present form of the fifth act, but is prominent in all of the others ; the main story of the feigned law and the main portion of the Gnotho story are by Middleton ; passages that resemble Middleton are like his early work ; Middleton wrote two other plays, *P* and *BMC*, with the same plot scheme, namely, a tragi-comedy main plot and a sub-plot from the lower London life ; and the climax of the play, still retaining many of Middleton's characteristics of style, allows everybody to repent and escape punishment in the genuine Middleton manner.

It has already been shown (page 2) that *The Old Law* is probably an early play, *circ.* 1599. The date of the revisions

can only be surmised. Mr. Thomas Seccombe¹ and Mr. Fleay² assert that in 1614 the Prince of Wales' Company, with Rowley as the leading comedian, was united with the Lady Elizabeth's Company, for which Middleton was writing. The same authorities assert that in 1616 the companies separated, Rowley and Middleton following their old companies. During the amalgamation of the two companies there was an opportunity for the two men to work together; but I doubt if the play was revised at that time. The revision by Rowley of a play originally by Middleton, when both men were working for the same company, could hardly have occurred except by collaboration. That collaboration is highly improbable is shown by the fact that there are no less than six, possibly seven, places where it is practically impossible to separate Rowley's work from Middleton's. Had they been working together, we should expect to find a division of the play, either by acts and scenes, or by comic and tragic situations. It is more likely, therefore, that when the properties were divided at the separation of the two companies, the manuscript of *The Old Law* fell into the hands of Rowley. If so, the revision is likely to have been made after 1616.

There is, however, another possibility. Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Fleay assert also that in 1621 Rowley was with the Lady Elizabeth's Company, for which Middleton used to write. At this time he may have got possession of the old manuscript and made the revision. The chief objection to this theory is that Rowley (on the authority of Mr. Seccombe and Mr. Fleay) is supposed to have retired as an actor soon after, and his work on *The Old Law* shows youth rather than old age. Then, too, an early date, soon after 1616, agrees better with the possible date for Massinger's revision, since it puts the two revisions farther apart.

¹ Article on *William Rowley* in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

² *Chronicle of the English Drama*; F. G. Fleay, vol. ii, p. 98.

That Massinger was the last reviser is pretty evident from some otherwise curious passages in the fifth act. Lines 79-105 and 125-147, both assigned to Massinger, come at a point where Eugenia and Simonides might well make considerable sport if they are to keep up their parts as Rowley began with them. Instead, they are restrainedly humorous in the true Massinger style. In lines 263-416 these two characters become more noisy with less reason for it; here they more nearly resemble what Rowley would be likely to make of them. Then in lines 532-713, just as Gnotho gets well started in a fine piece of burlesque, the manuscript becomes confusing to the printer, and Massinger's style appears. It is not at all difficult, therefore, to infer that Massinger was revising Rowley, and deemed it wise to cut out the coarsest of the noisy burlesque. This explanation will help to make clear the insertion by Massinger of nearly all of the second scene of the fourth act. In the hands of Rowley, this might well have been very low comedy, in all but a small part of the scene in the woods where Leonides is discovered. As such it would naturally lead up to a climax of low comedy in the last act. Even as it is, there remains a curious little tag end of inharmonious low comedy in the last few lines of the fourth act. We are rather surprised to see Simonides hide behind Eugenia to escape the wrath of Cleanthes, and then cut his finger on his own sword. This is plainly Rowley's Simonides, not Massinger's. There can be little doubt, therefore, that Massinger was the last reviser.

The facts just mentioned not only show who did the last work on the play, but they indicate a method of revision that helps to a possible date. Massinger seems to be expurgating the lowest comedy, to be making it more dignified, and to be glorifying royalty. This latter fact is shown by the addition to Middleton's ending of the play at line 686. All that follows is in praise of the duke for his royal wisdom and his magnificent entertainment of the old courtiers whom

he had imprisoned for a short time. Was this play, then, revised by Massinger for his company to perform in Salisbury House before the King and Queen, as part of the coronation ceremonies in 1625? Such an inference, although it is purely conjectural, is certainly possible. Without some further evidence, this can be only a guess; but it has the merit of explaining the method of revision consistently with the fact, deemed of importance by the printer, that the play was "Acted before the King and Queene at Salisbury House."

EDGAR COIT MORRIS.